

WORLDWIDE

issue 10

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TINYONION

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AZZY



HE LIKED MY NAME.

I MEAN, **EVERYBODY** IN FUCKING TECH LIKED MY NAME, BUT HE DID THE MOST.



FUCK, I WANT TO **RECORD** THIS.

REALLY, FAUSTA?



YEAH. **REALLY**. ARE YOU **KIDDING** ME? AT THE VERY LEAST IT'LL BE USEFUL, AND AT THE MOST IT'LL MAKE A **REALLY** GOOD PODCAST.

THERE ISN'T EVEN AN **INTERNET** ANYMORE. WHO ARE YOU **PODCASTING** TO?

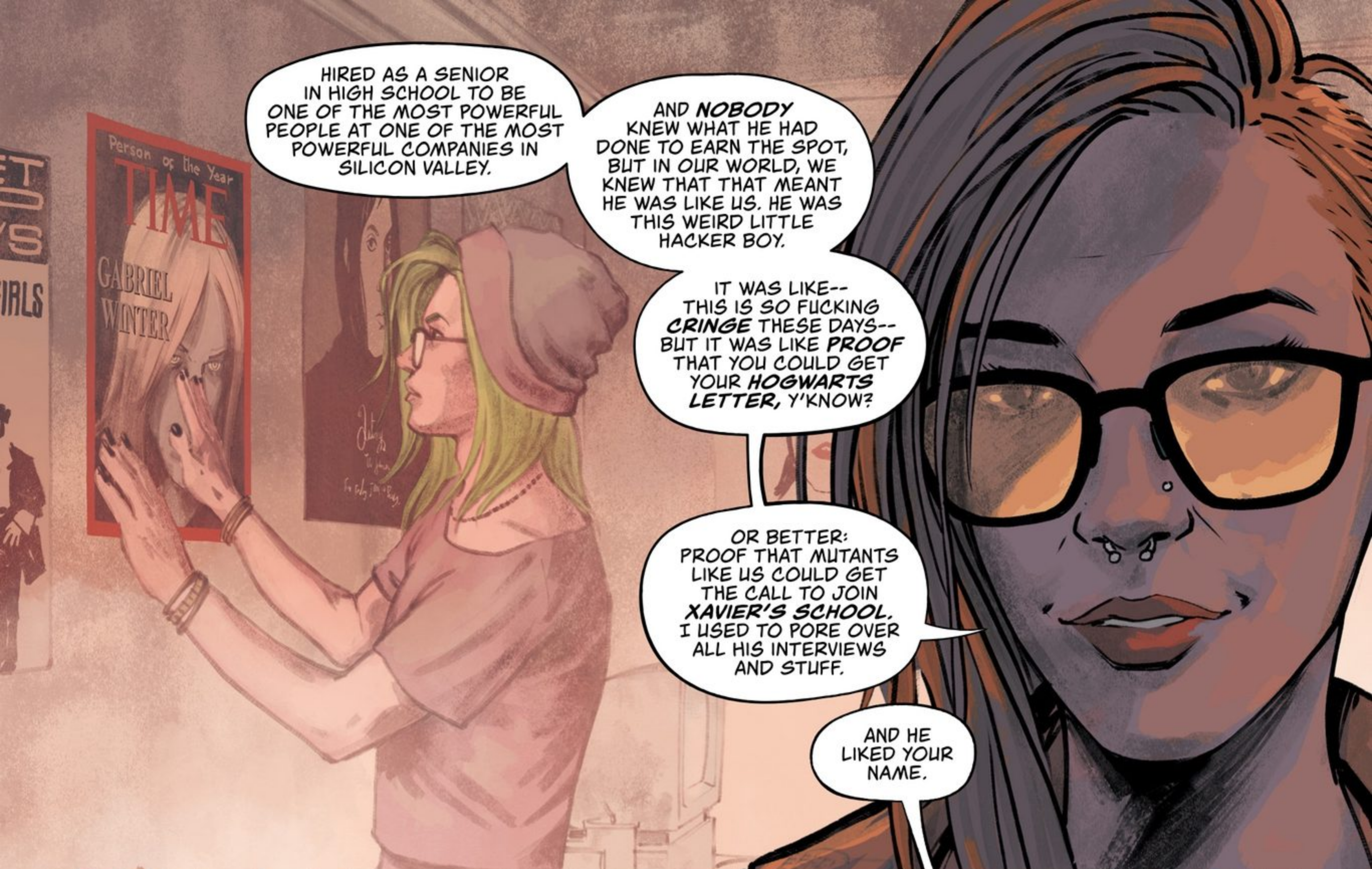
THERE'S STILL **RADIO**! DON'T BE A LITTLE SHIT.



THIS THING MIGHT NOT BE CONNECTED TO ANYTHING, BUT IT CAN STILL **RECORD**. I WISH WE HADN'T LEFT MY BAG WITH ALL THE GOOD STUFF IN PENNSYLVANIA.

BUT UNFORTUNATELY, A **NAKED LADY** TRIED TO SET ME ON **FIRE** IN YOUR BABY BROTHER'S BEDROOM.





HIRED AS A SENIOR
IN HIGH SCHOOL TO BE
ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL
PEOPLE AT ONE OF THE MOST
POWERFUL COMPANIES IN
SILICON VALLEY.

AND **NOBODY**
KNEW WHAT HE HAD
DONE TO EARN THE SPOT,
BUT IN OUR WORLD, WE
KNEW THAT THAT MEANT
HE WAS LIKE US. HE WAS
THIS WEIRD LITTLE
HACKER BOY.

IT WAS LIKE--
THIS IS SO FUCKING
CRINGE THESE DAYS--
BUT IT WAS LIKE **PROOF**
THAT YOU COULD GET
YOUR **HOGWARTS**
LETTER, Y'KNOW?

OR BETTER:
PROOF THAT MUTANTS
LIKE US COULD GET
THE CALL TO JOIN
XAVIER'S SCHOOL.
I USED TO PORE OVER
ALL HIS INTERVIEWS
AND STUFF.

AND HE
LIKED YOUR
NAME.



WELL, YEAH. I MEAN
THE WHOLE...OKAY, DO
YOU KNOW THE WHOLE
THING WITH OUR
PARENTS?

I DON'T.



SO. DADDY
DEAREST WAS
RICHARD WELLINGTON
LANE. NAME SOUNDS
FANCIER THAN HE WAS.
BUT HIS FRIENDS CALLED
HIM "WELLS." AND THEN
HE MEETS A NICE
YOUNG LADY NAMED
SHELLY.

THEY GET
MARRIED. AND
LIKE, HE'D ALWAYS
COMPLAIN ABOUT
HIS NAME.

HE USED TO SAY
HE WISHED HE TOOK OUR
MOM'S NAME, BUT IT WAS
SOME POLISH NIGHTMARE
NAME NOBODY WOULD HAVE
EVER SPELLED RIGHT.



HE'D SAY, "A LANE IS UNREMARKABLE,
IT'S NOT IMPRESSIVE LIKE A FREEWAY,
OR CUTE LIKE A CUL DE SAC, IT'S
JUST A LITTLE ROAD IN THE
MIDDLE OF NOWHERE."

IT WAS A CUTE
LINE ANYWAYS, AND HE
WANTED HIS KIDS TO HAVE
INTERESTING NAMES.

AND HE WAS A NERD. LIKE, HE AND MOM LOVED SCIENCE FICTION. AND THEY LOVED THE FACT THAT THEIR NAMES WERE SHELLY AND WELLS.

LIKE MARY SHELLY (not spelled right, though he did try to convince her to change it a few times), AND H. G. WELLS, WHOSE WRITING BASICALLY LAID OUT THE GROUNDWORK FOR ALL SCIENCE FICTION IN THE 20TH CENTURY.

SO, YOU GET ASIMOV LANE. CLARKE LANE. BRADBURY LANE.

MOM HAD A STILLBIRTH THAT THEY WERE GOING TO CALL HERBERT. IT WAS A GIRL, AND SHE WOULD HAVE FUCKING HATED ALL OF US AND THEM FOR THAT.

SHE PROBABLY WOULD HAVE ENDED UP QUEERER THAN I DID.

AND THEN ELLISON AND GIBSON. LITTLE SAMPLE COURSE OF 20TH CENTURY SCI-FI.



THEY DIED WHEN HE WAS, LIKE, EIGHT YEARS OLD. HE PROBABLY DOESN'T REMEMBER MOST OF THE DETAILS.

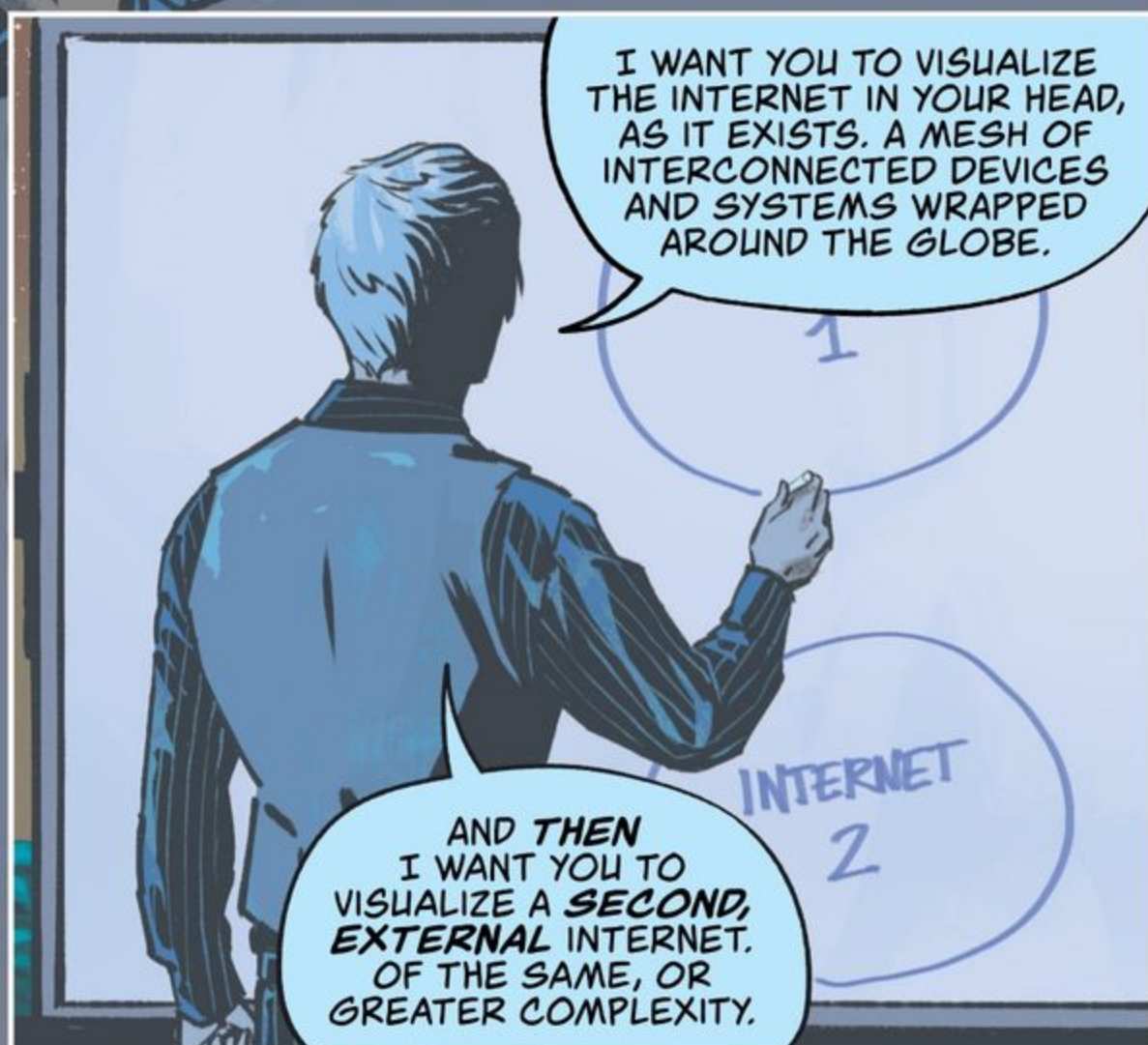
AND BY THEN I WAS ALREADY IN THE BAY AREA. JUST STARTING TO FUCK AROUND WITH GENDER, TECHNOLOGY, AND MIND-ALTERING DRUGS IN A MORE SERIOUS WAY.

AND GABRIEL WINTER, THE GOLDEN CHILD, WAS SUDDENLY IN MY COMPUTER TELLING ME HE LOVED MY NAME, AND HE LOVED THE STORY OF THE NAMES OF ALL MY SIBLINGS.

AND HE ASKED ME TO COME MEET HIM AND OTHERS ON A SPECIAL LITTLE SIDE PROJECT OF HIS.



WE'RE
GOING
TO PLAY
A GAME.



I WANT YOU TO VISUALIZE
THE INTERNET IN YOUR HEAD,
AS IT EXISTS. A MESH OF
INTERCONNECTED DEVICES
AND SYSTEMS WRAPPED
AROUND THE GLOBE.

AND THEN
I WANT YOU TO
VISUALIZE A **SECOND,
EXTERNAL** INTERNET.
OF THE SAME, OR
GREATER COMPLEXITY.



I WANT YOU TO IMAGINE THAT
THIS SECOND INTERNET IS
MALICIOUS. THAT IT WANTS
TO **ABSORB** OUR INTERNET.
THAT IT WANTS TO DESTROY
ANYTHING IT CANNOT
MAKE INTO ITSELF.

ANY PIECE
OF OUR INTERNET
TOUCHED BY THE
OTHER INTERNET
BECOMES A PART
OF IT. THINK OF IT
LIKE A **CONTAGION**.

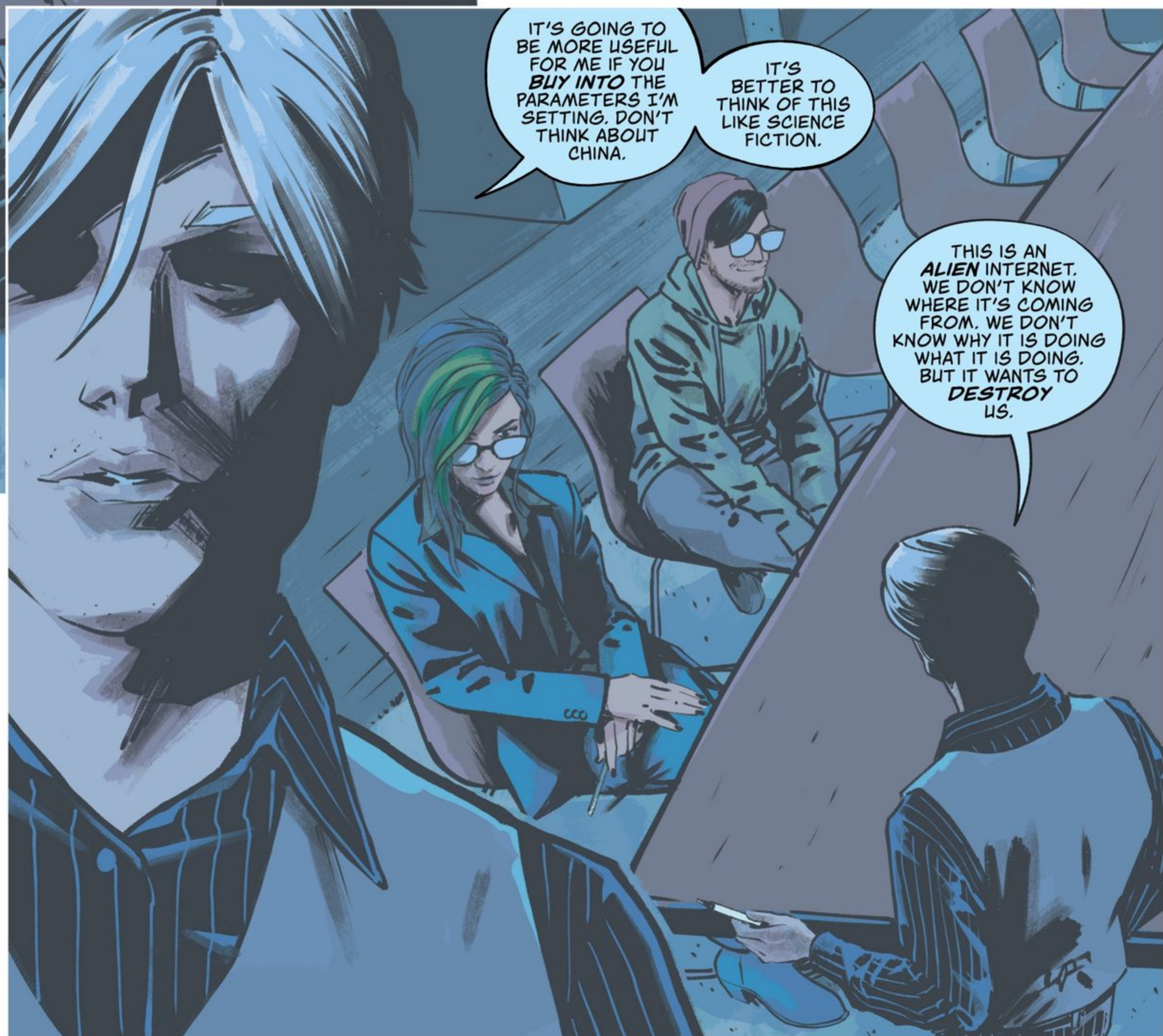
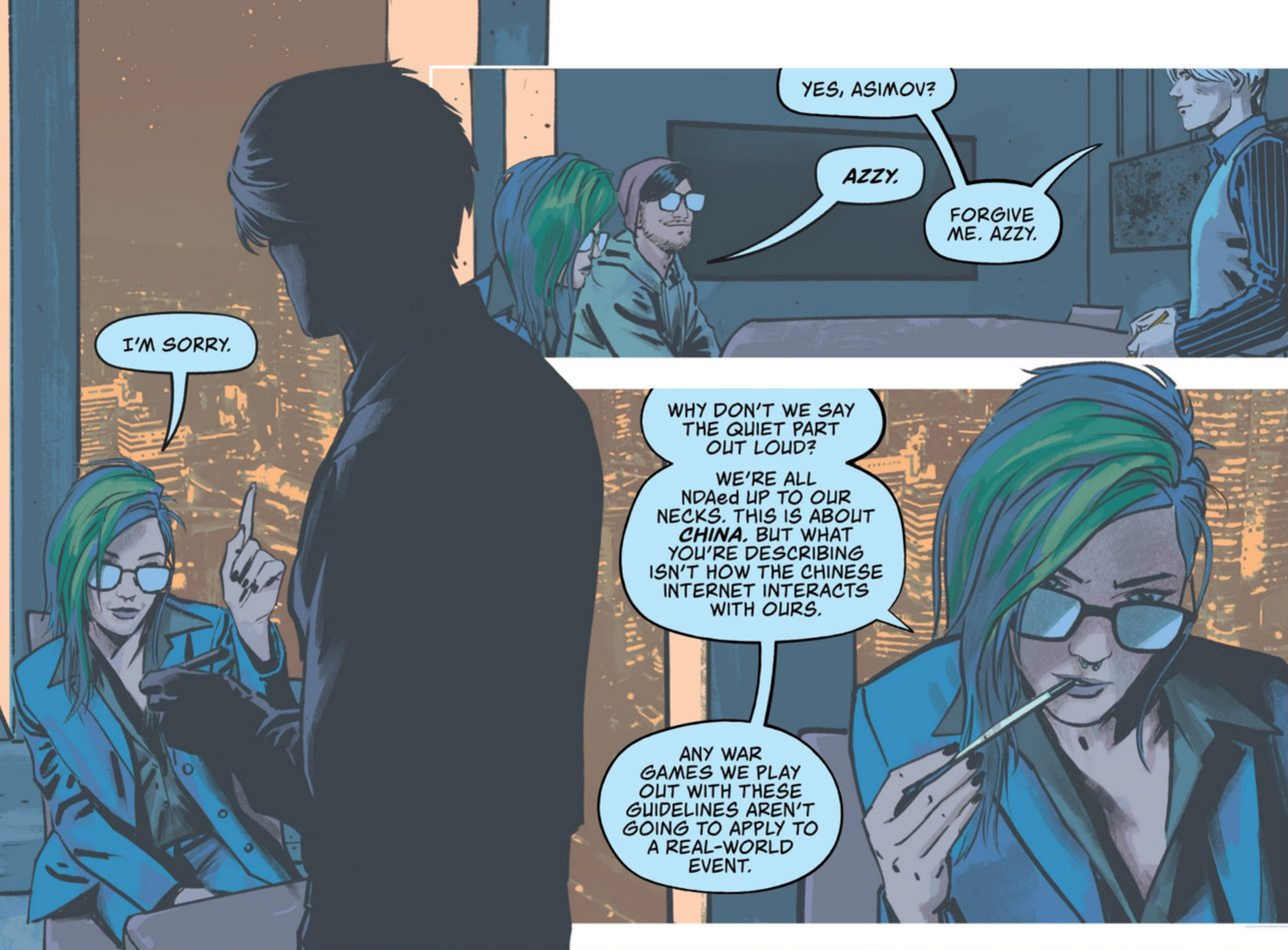


YOUR FIRST TOOL
OF DEFENSE IS ANGEL
ITSELF, AND THE
INFRASTRUCTURE THAT
ANGEL PROVIDES THE
INTERNET AS WE
KNOW IT.

BUT I WANT
YOU TO THINK OUTSIDE
THE BOX. WHAT OTHER
DEFENSES WOULD NEED
TO BE DEPLOYED IF THIS
EXTERNAL INTERNET
ATTACKED OURS.

I DON'T WANT
YOU CONCERNING
YOURSELF WITH
THE **LEGALITY** OR
MORALITY OF ANY
OF THE ACTIONS
YOU SUGGEST.

ASSUME WE
HAVE THE ABILITY
TO DO **ANYTHING**
NECESSARY TO
PROTECT OUR-
SELVES.





IT'S THE JOB OF THE PEOPLE IN THIS ROOM TO **SAVE THE WORLD** FROM THE ALIEN INTERNET. THAT MEANS FIGURING OUT WHERE **OUR** INTERNET IS WEAKEST TO AN OUTSIDE ATTACK.

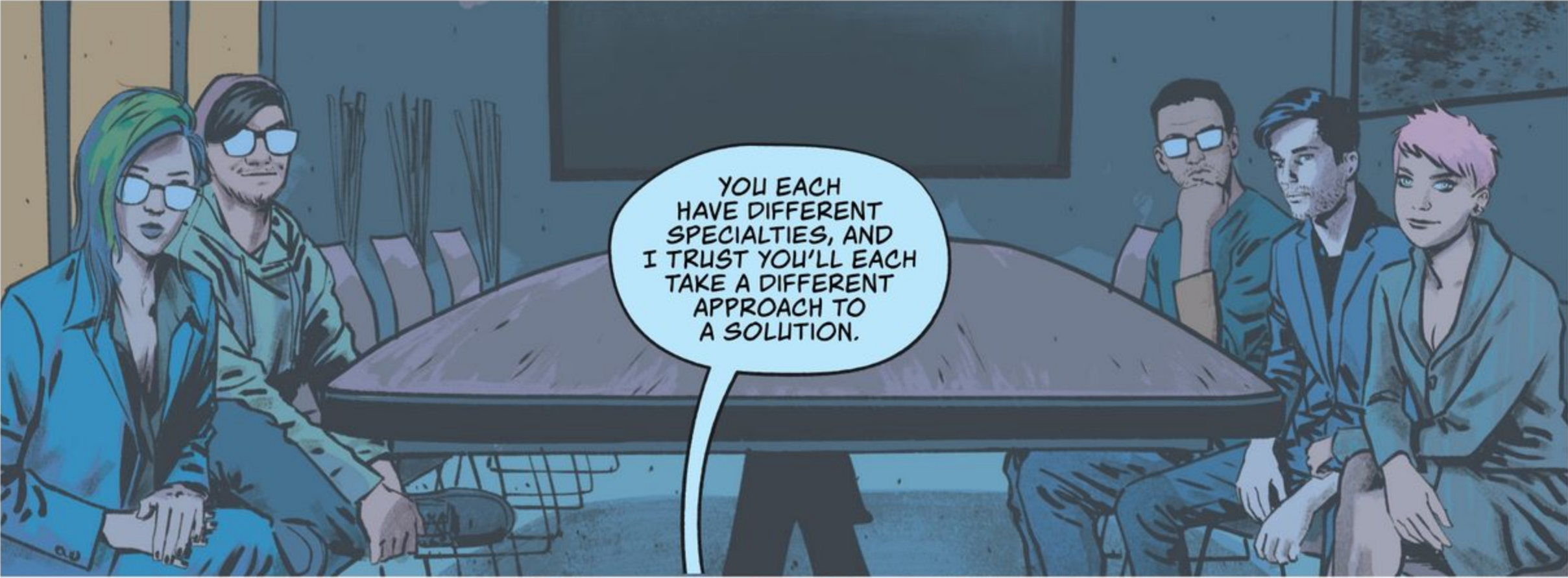


WE'LL START IN THEORY, AND THEN WE'LL BEGIN TO TEST IT IN THE FIELD.

HOW DO YOU MEAN IN THE FIELD?



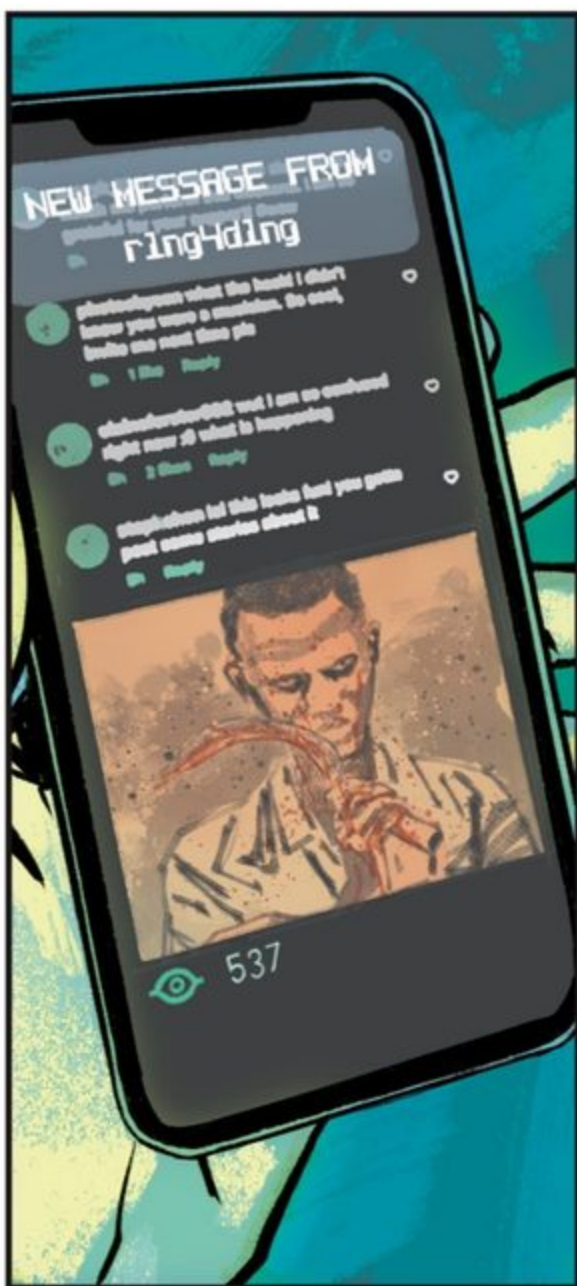
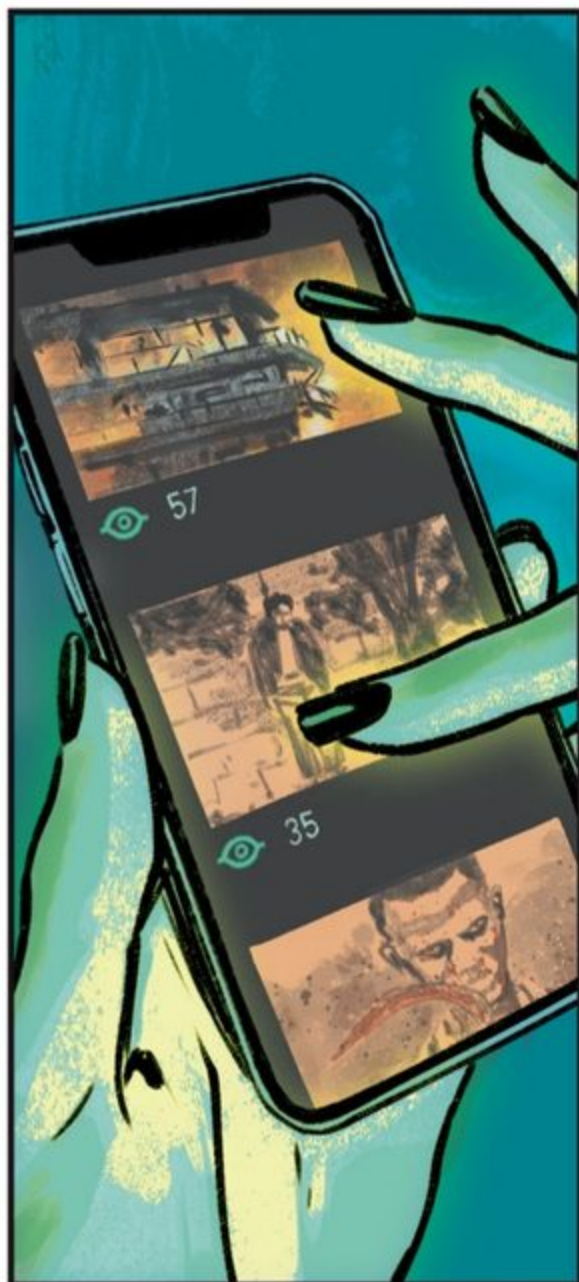
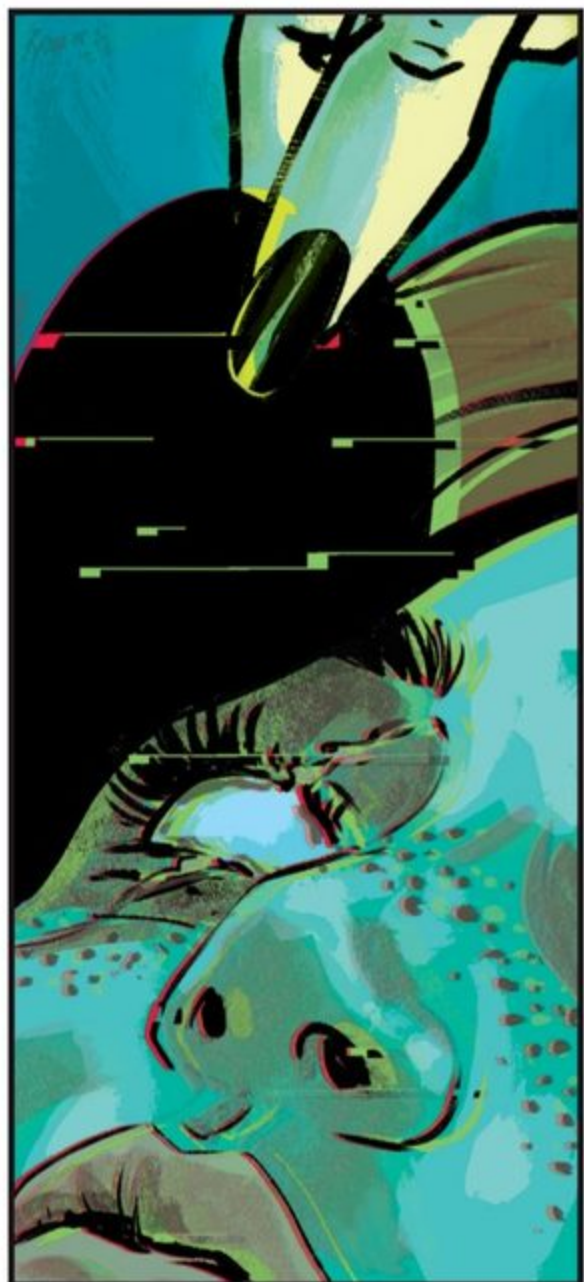
I WILL BE PLAYING THE PART OF THE EVIL INTERNET, WHICH I'LL CALL "THE UNDERNET" FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS GAME. WE'LL CALL YOU FIVE *w0rldtr33*.



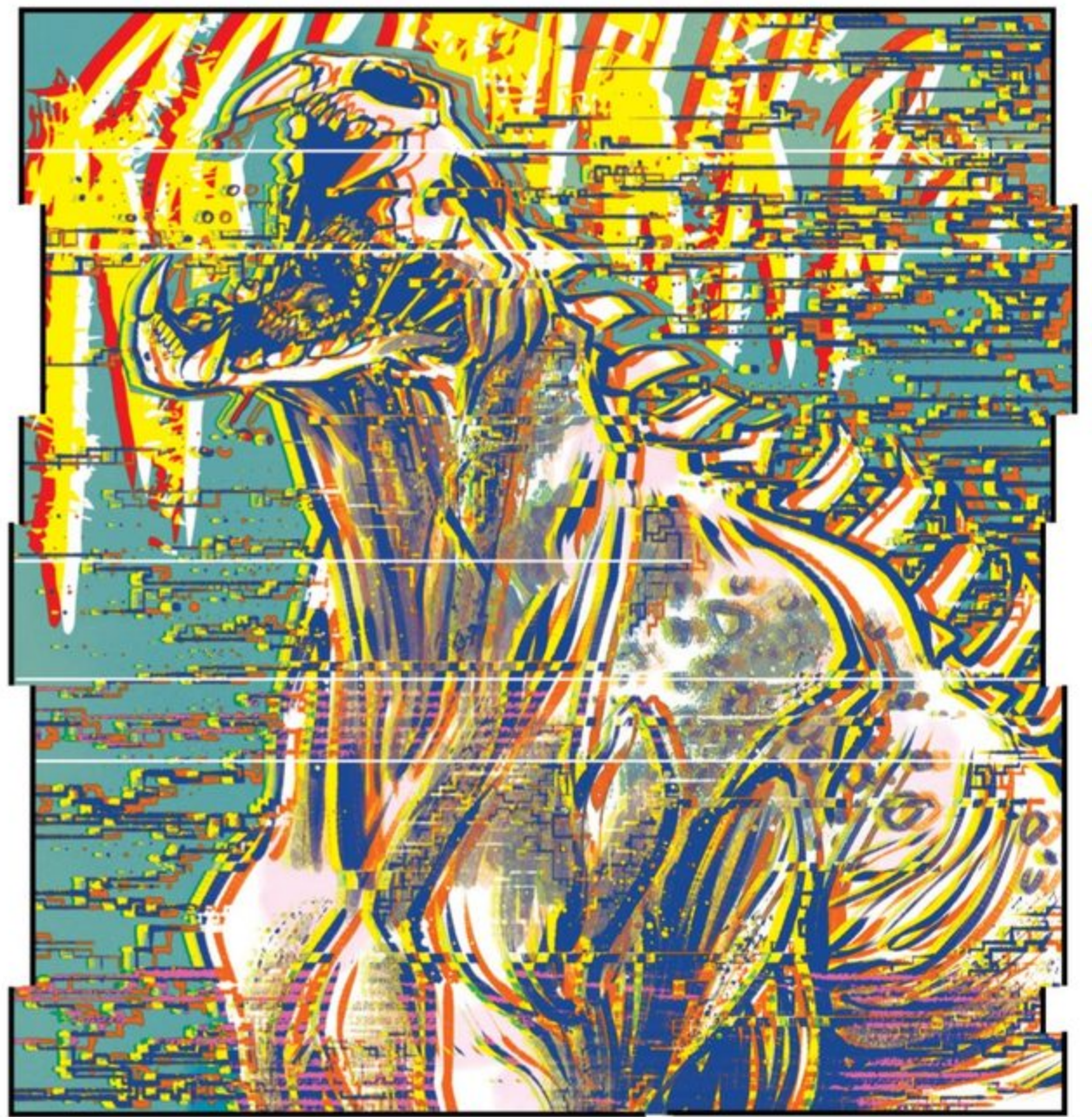
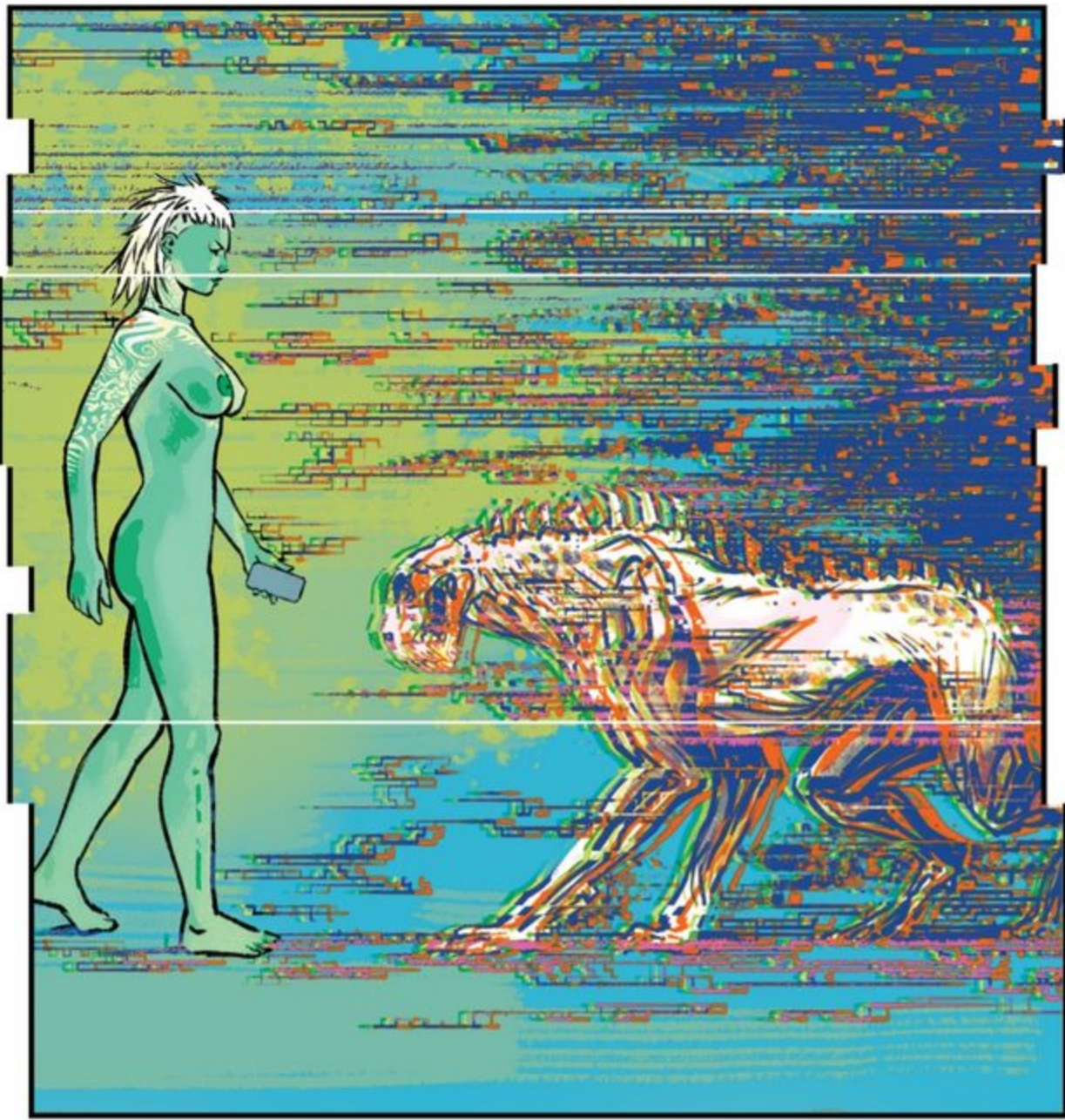
YOU EACH HAVE DIFFERENT SPECIALTIES, AND I TRUST YOU'LL EACH TAKE A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO A SOLUTION.



I'LL ATTACK. YOU'LL DEFEND.







ALLY

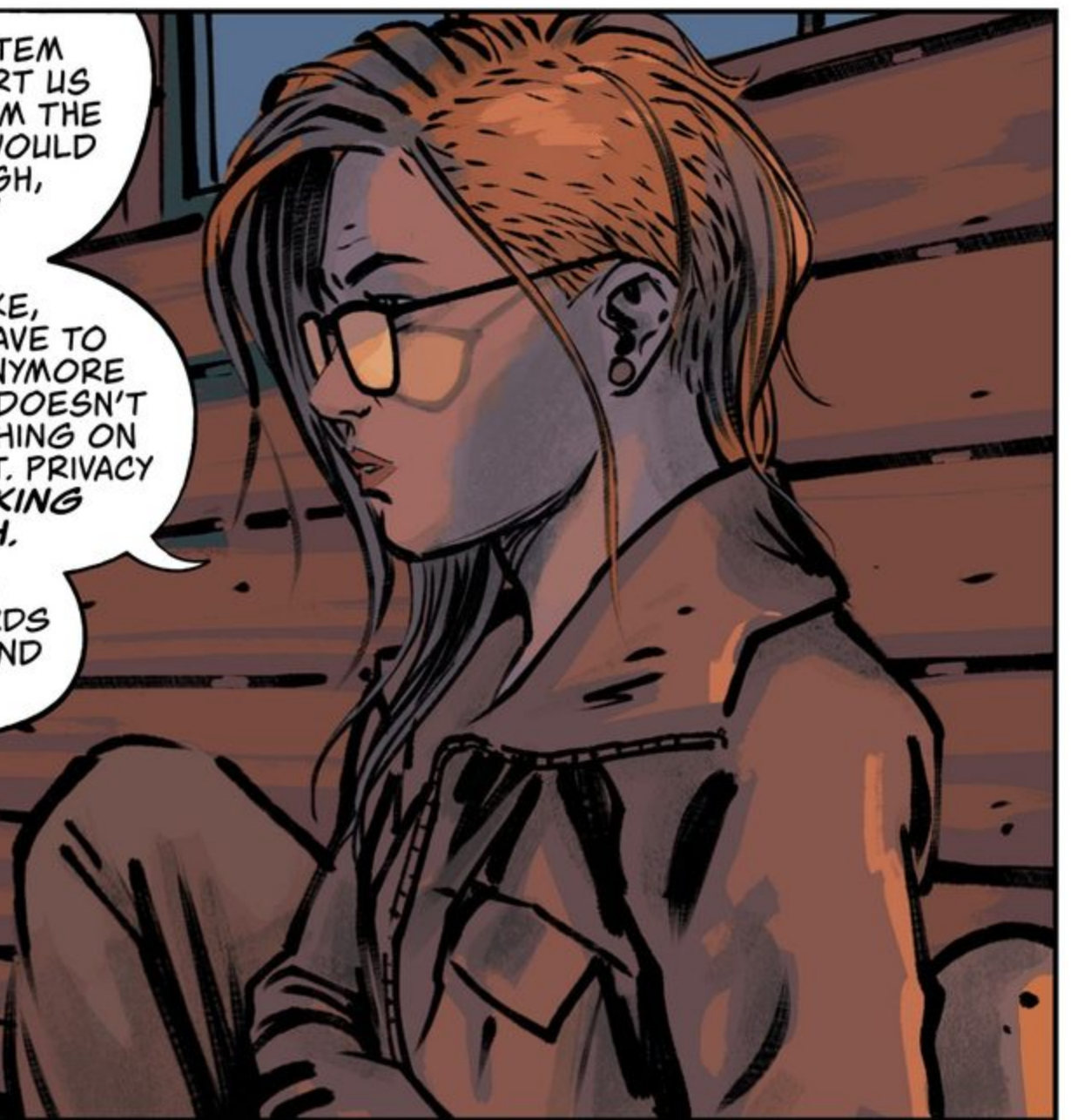
I GOT
PRETTY GOOD
AT PLAYING
HIS LITTLE
GAME.



WE BUILT A SYSTEM
THAT COULD ALERT US
TO ANYTHING FROM THE
UNDERNET THAT WOULD
BREAK THROUGH,
TRACKED BY
ANGEL.

AND LIKE,
I DON'T HAVE TO
PRETEND ANYMORE
THAT ANGEL DOESN'T
SEE EVERYTHING ON
THE INTERNET. PRIVACY
IS A **FUCKING**
MYTH.

EVERYTHING IS
MAPPED BACKWARDS
AND FORWARDS AND
UP AND DOWN.



BUT THE
POSSIBILITIES WERE
ENDLESS, AND I STARTED
GETTING SICK OF HOW
TENTATIVE GABRIEL WAS
BEING, SO I PLANTED
A SEED IN HIS HEAD.

THIS WAS
ABOUT **VIRALITY**,
AND SO IT WAS ABOUT
WHICH IN-GROUPS
WOULD BE MOST
SUSCEPTIBLE TO
SPREADING IT.

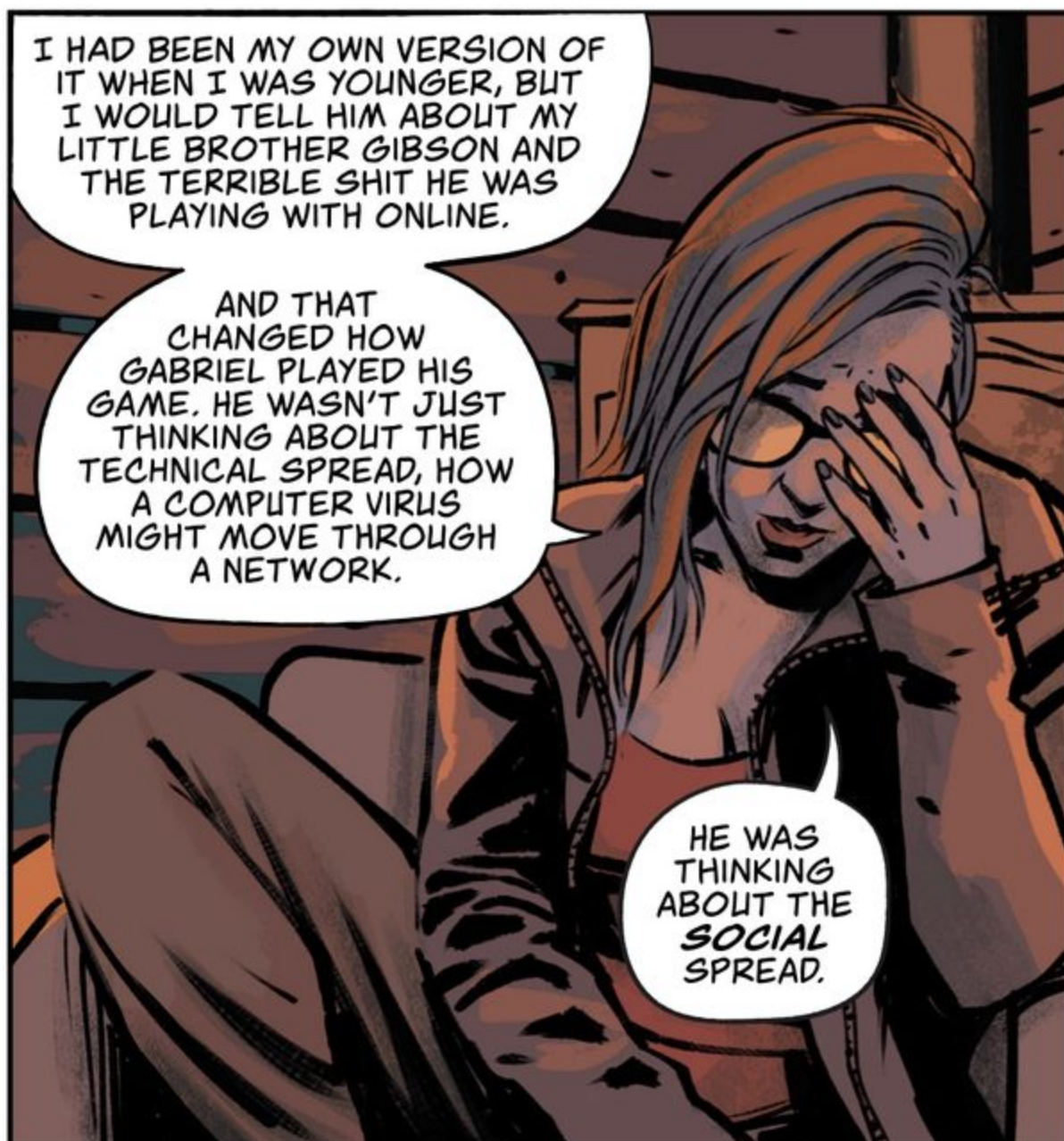
AND I KEPT
POINTING TO THESE
AGGRIEVED, MOSTLY
YOUNG, WHITE MALE
VOICES. THE 4chan
KIDS. THE ONES WHO
FELT LISTLESS AND
DETACHED.



I HAD BEEN MY OWN VERSION OF
IT WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, BUT
I WOULD TELL HIM ABOUT MY
LITTLE BROTHER GIBSON AND
THE TERRIBLE SHIT HE WAS
PLAYING WITH ONLINE.

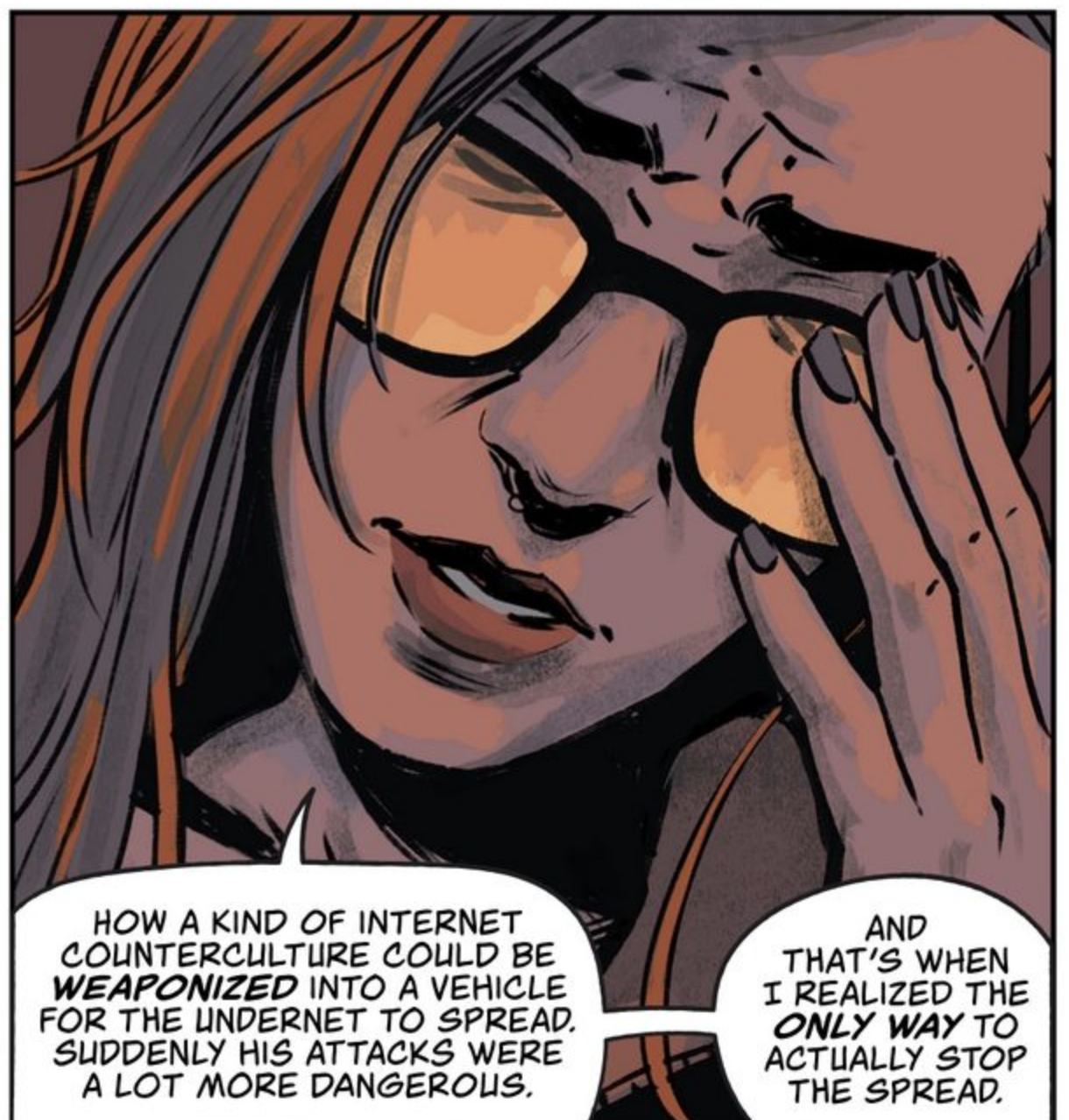
AND THAT
CHANGED HOW
GABRIEL PLAYED HIS
GAME. HE WASN'T JUST
THINKING ABOUT THE
TECHNICAL SPREAD, HOW
A COMPUTER VIRUS
MIGHT MOVE THROUGH
A NETWORK.

HE WAS
THINKING
ABOUT THE
SOCIAL
SPREAD.



HOW A KIND OF INTERNET
COUNTERCULTURE COULD BE
WEAPONIZED INTO A VEHICLE
FOR THE UNDERNET TO SPREAD.
SUDDENLY HIS ATTACKS WERE
A LOT MORE DANGEROUS.

AND
THAT'S WHEN
I REALIZED THE
ONLY WAY TO
ACTUALLY STOP
THE SPREAD.





YOU WANT TO BLOW UP THE INTERNET.



I THINK YOU'D **HAVE TO**, WITH ANGEL RESOURCES YOU CAN GET MOST OF IT DOWN. BUT I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANY SERVER YOU COULDN'T TALK YOUR WAY INTO, IF YOU NEEDED TO.

A WORLD WITHOUT AN INTERNET.

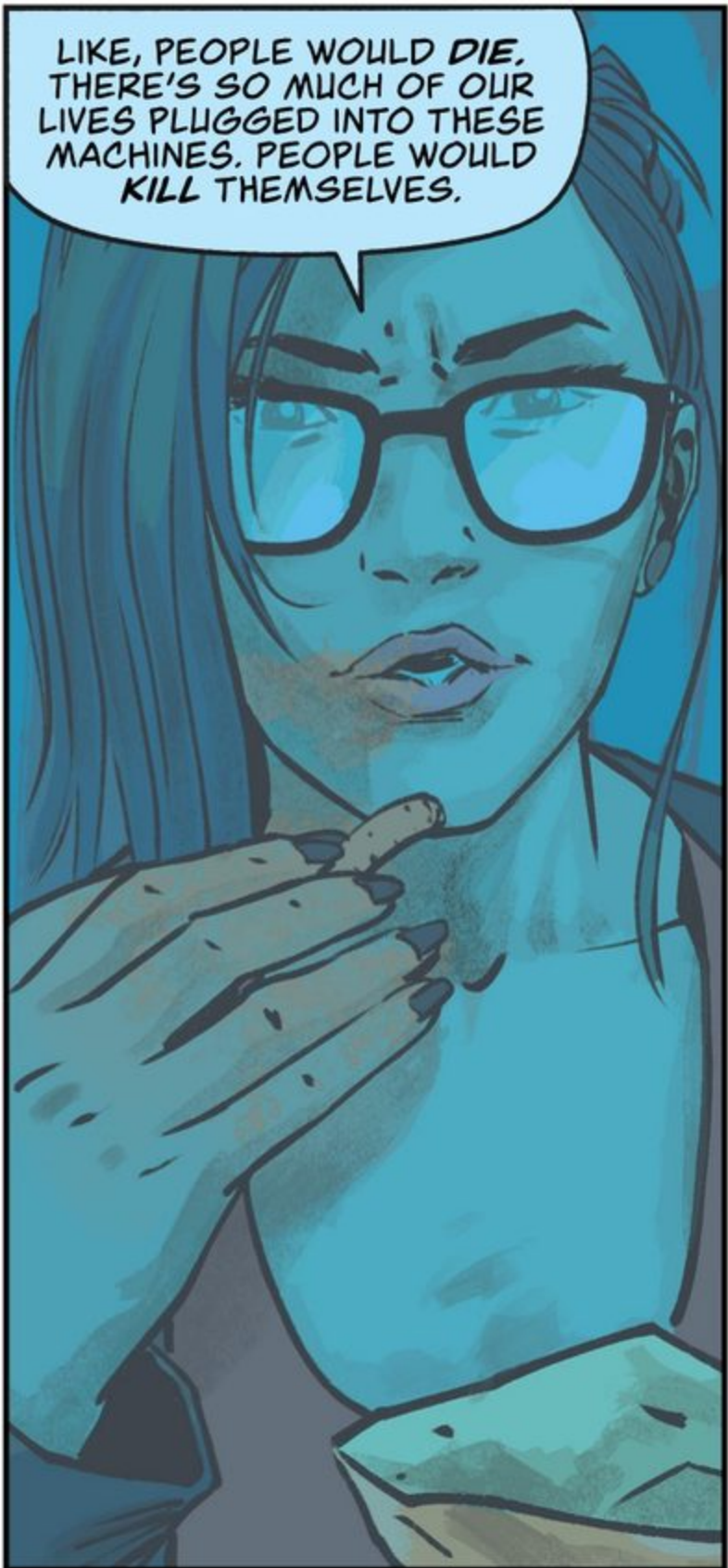


IT'D COME BACK. BUT IT WOULD COME BACK **DIFFERENT**. TOO LITTLE IS BACKED UP PHYSICALLY THESE DAYS. PEOPLE CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE.

AND I MEAN, YOU'D HAVE TO IMAGINE THE HUMAN COST.



WHAT DO YOU THINK THE HUMAN COST WOULD BE?



LIKE, PEOPLE WOULD **DIE**. THERE'S SO MUCH OF OUR LIVES PLUGGED INTO THESE MACHINES. PEOPLE WOULD **KILL** THEMSELVES.

"LIKE, A NOT-INSIGNIFICANT
NUMBER OF PEOPLE
WOULD KILL THEMSELVES.



"AND BEYOND THAT, YOU HAVE
TO REMEMBER THE STAYING
POWER OF THE ALWAYS-ON,
ALWAYS-CONNECTED LIFE.

"SUDDENLY WE'D BE LIVING IN
A WORLD WHERE YOU DON'T KNOW
WHAT'S HAPPENING ONE CITY OVER,
LET ALONE ONE *COUNTRY* OVER.



"PEOPLE WOULD
KNOW THEY
COULD GET
AWAY WITH SHIT,
BEFORE THE
ALL-SEEING EYE
OF SAURON
TURNS ITSELF
BACK ON.

"WE'RE TALKING
ABOUT COUNTRIES
GOING OVER
BORDERS AND
TAKING WHAT THEY
THINK IS THEIRS.
WE'RE TALKING
MASS DEATH."





"BUT WE'RE ALSO TALKING ABOUT THE GUY DOWN THE STREET SHOOTING HIS WIFE OR HIS BOSS BECAUSE, FOR A MOMENT, HE'LL GET AWAY WITH IT."



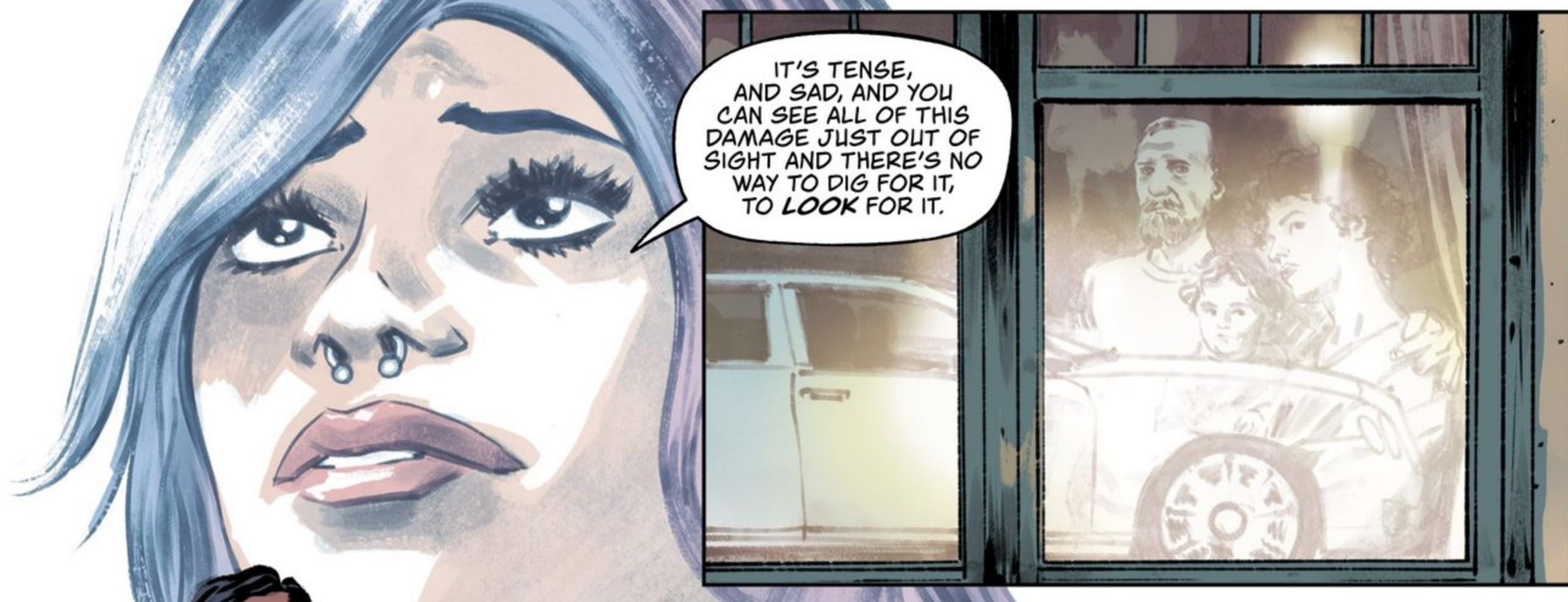
"ALL OF THE BAD THINGS HUMANITY WANTS TO DO BUT DOESN'T BECAUSE EVERYONE'S LOOKING."

"THAT'S THE **EXTREME** SHIT, BUT A LOT OF IT WOULD PROBABLY BE...A LITTLE MORE **ORDINARY** THAN YOU'D EXPECT. PEOPLE WOULD BE ADRIFT. NOT ABLE TO GET THEIR FIX."

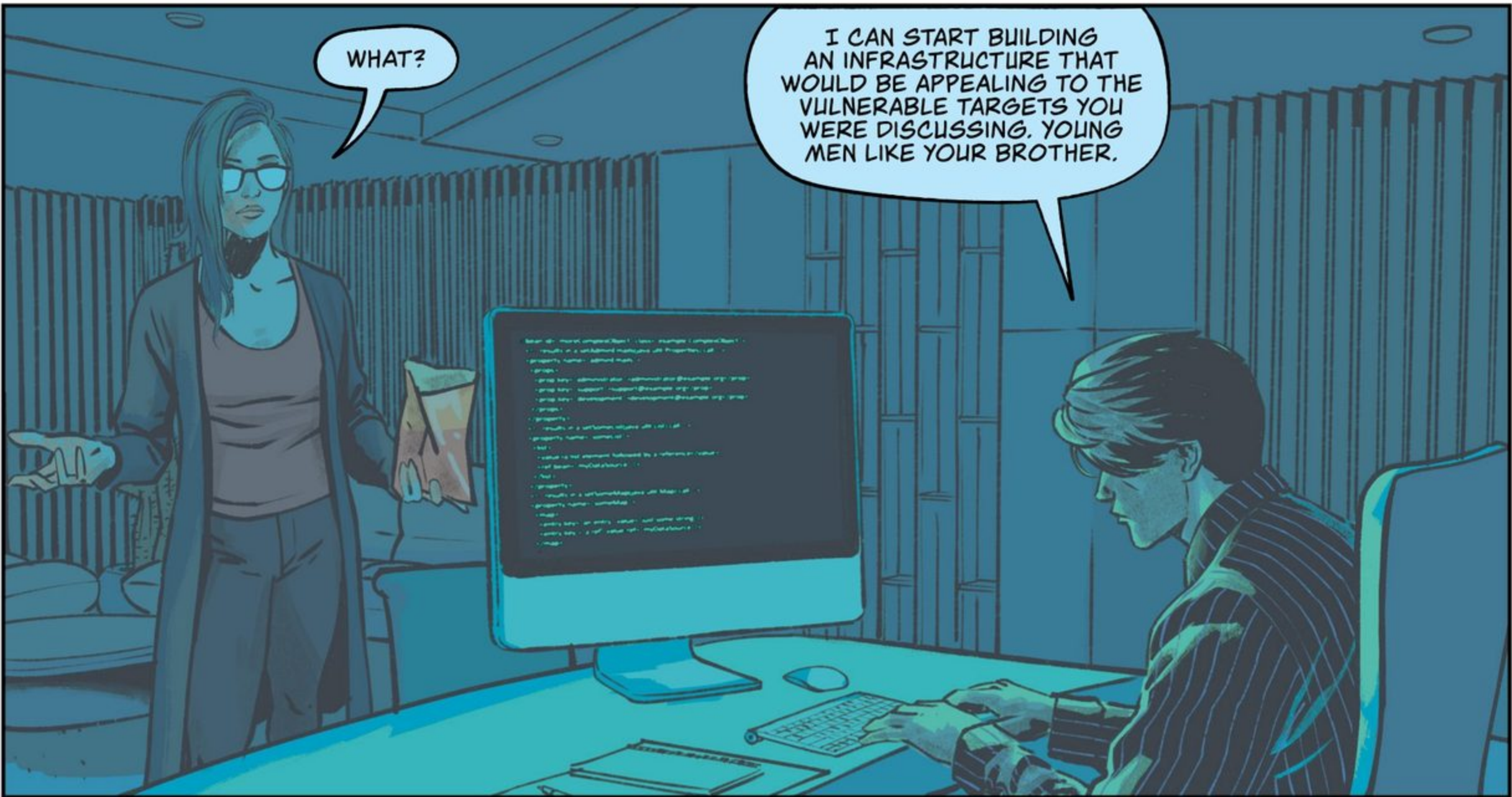


"EVERYONE WOULD BE LOST."









WHAT?

I CAN START BUILDING AN INFRASTRUCTURE THAT WOULD BE APPEALING TO THE VULNERABLE TARGETS YOU WERE DISCUSSING. YOUNG MEN LIKE YOUR BROTHER.



WAIT. ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT BRINGING ACTUAL KIDS INTO THIS? TRYING TO MAKE THEM AGENTS OF SOME MADE-UP SCI-FI THING...

HOW IS THAT A **HYPOTHETICAL**? THAT'S **FUCKING EVIL**.



IT'S **NECESSARY**.

I NEED TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU CUT THEM OFF FROM THE SOURCE. SEE WHAT THEY CAN BE PUSHED TO DO.



GABRIEL...**NO**.

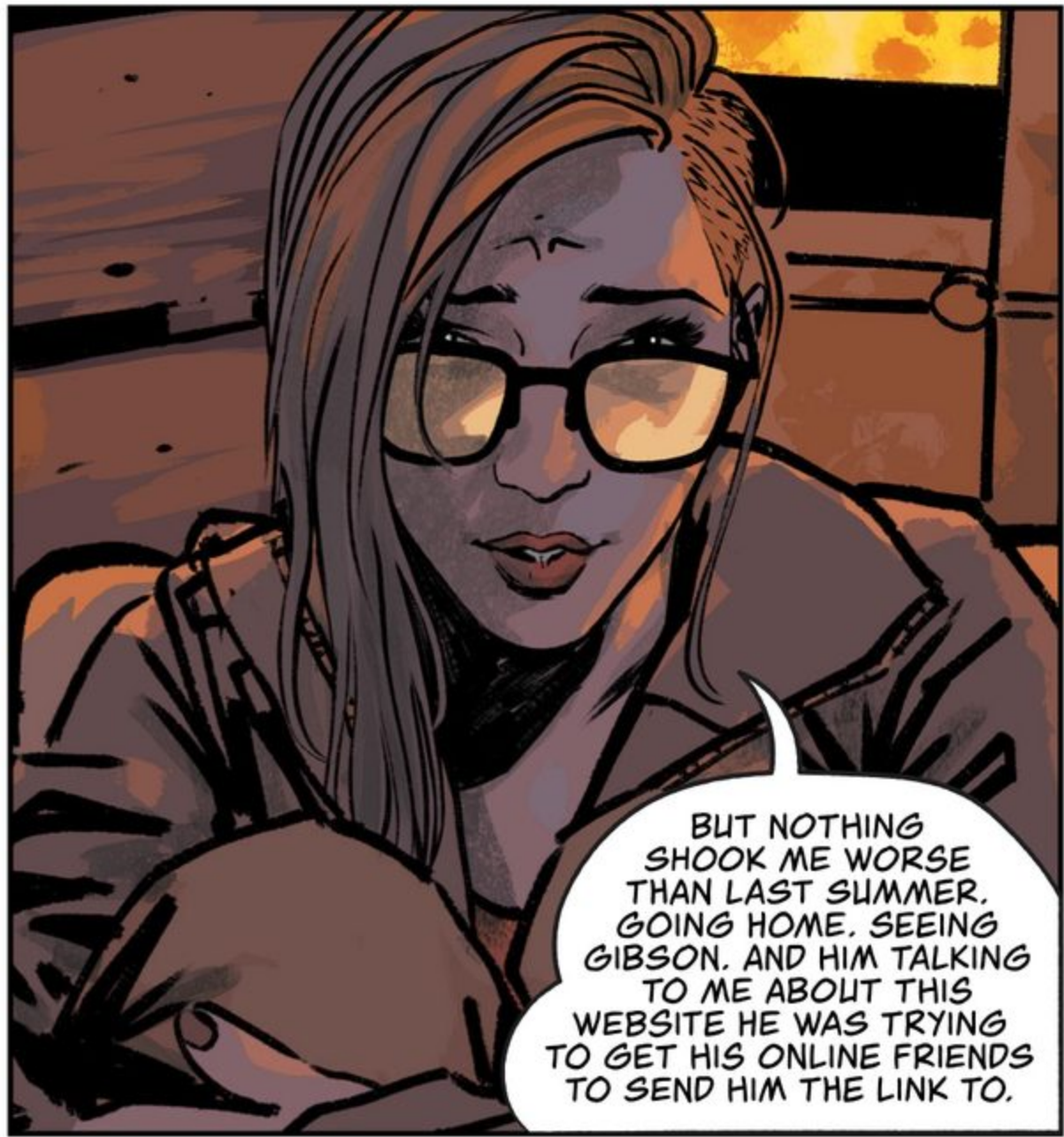
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW IMPORTANT THIS IS.



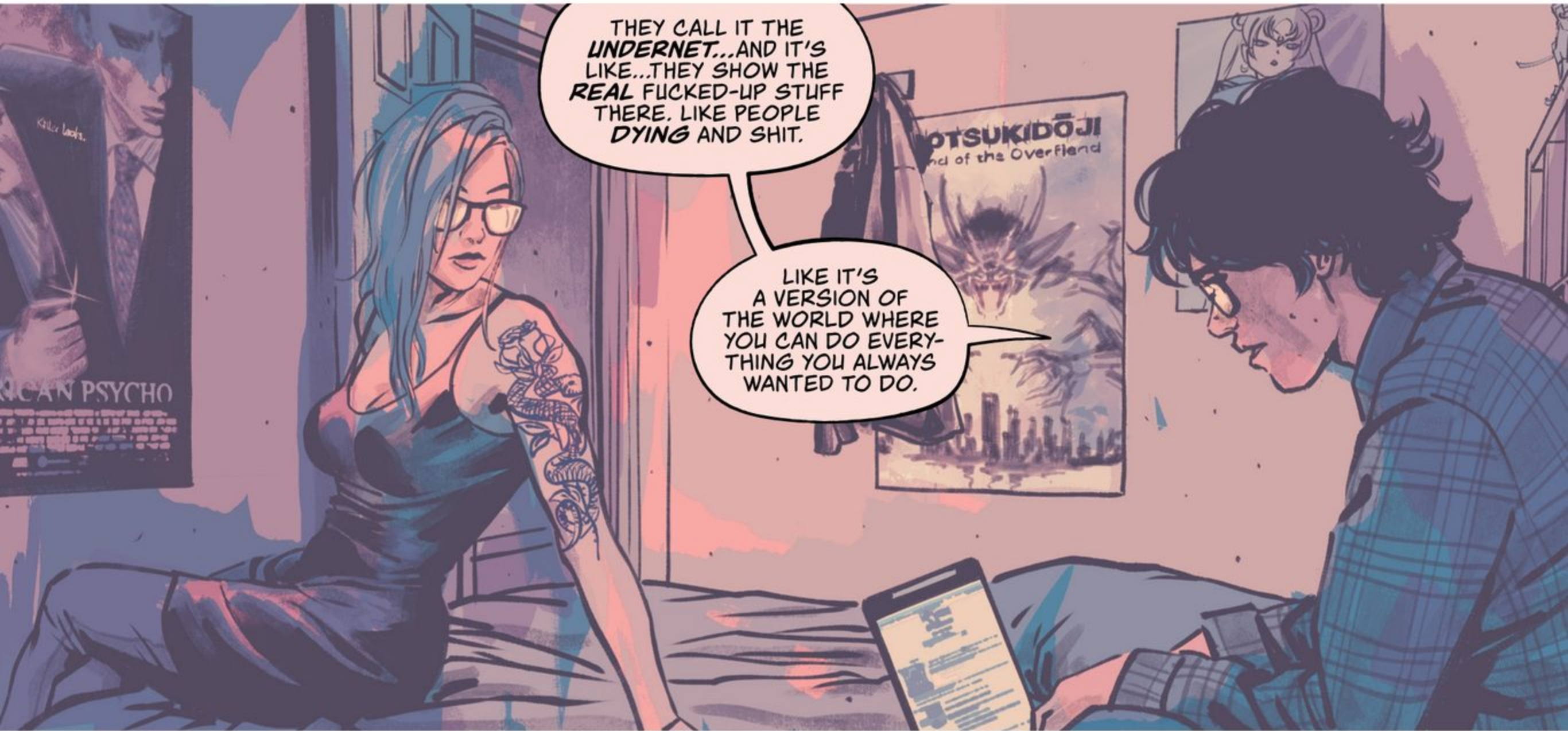
I JUST **TOLD** YOU HOW **UGLY** IT WAS GOING TO BE. AND YOU WANT TO MAKE IT AS **REAL** AS POSSIBLE? SO IT CAN TARGET PEOPLE LIKE MY **BROTHER**?



I *QUIT*.
I DECIDED I WASN'T
GOING TO HELP HIM.
I FUCKED OFF INTO
FREELANCER HELL AND
STARTED SPENDING
LESS TIME ON THE
COMPUTER. THE
WHOLE THING
SHOOK ME.



BUT NOTHING
SHOOK ME WORSE
THAN LAST SUMMER.
GOING HOME. SEEING
GIBSON. AND HIM TALKING
TO ME ABOUT THIS
WEBSITE HE WAS TRYING
TO GET HIS ONLINE FRIENDS
TO SEND HIM THE LINK TO.



THEY CALL IT THE
UNDERNET...AND IT'S
LIKE...THEY SHOW THE
REAL FUCKED-UP STUFF
THERE. LIKE PEOPLE
DYING AND SHIT.

LIKE IT'S
A VERSION OF
THE WORLD WHERE
YOU CAN DO EVERY-
THING YOU ALWAYS
WANTED TO DO.



I GOT INTO HIS COMPUTER
WHILE HE WAS SLEEPING, AND
I DUG INTO ALL THE PEOPLE
HE'D BEEN CHATTING WITH.
AND THERE WAS
THIS ONE...

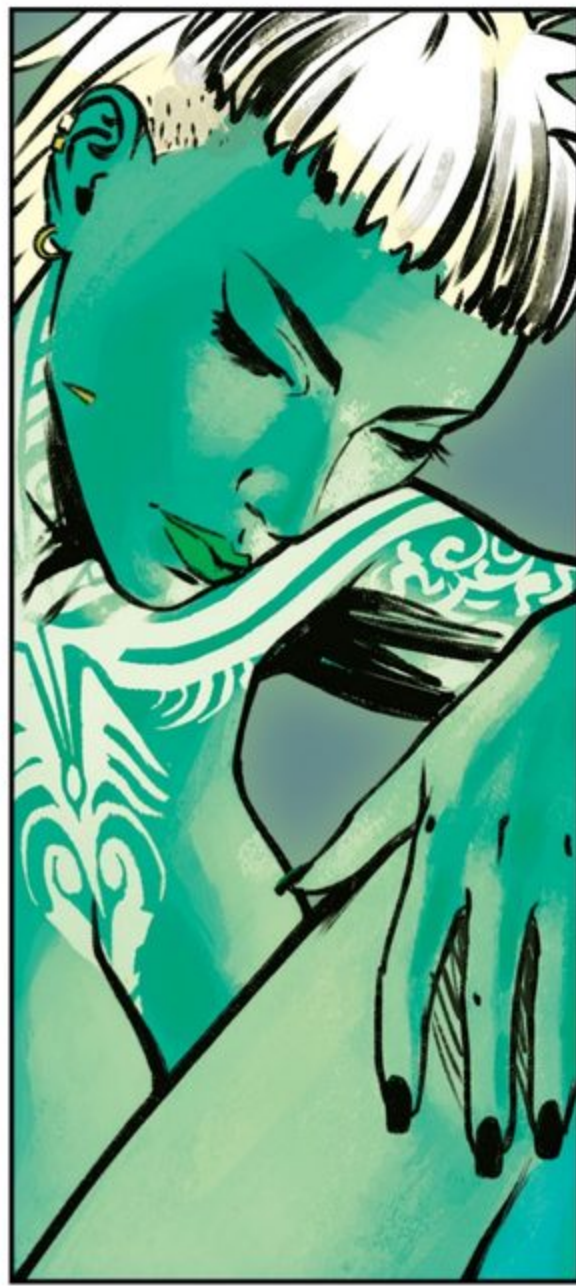
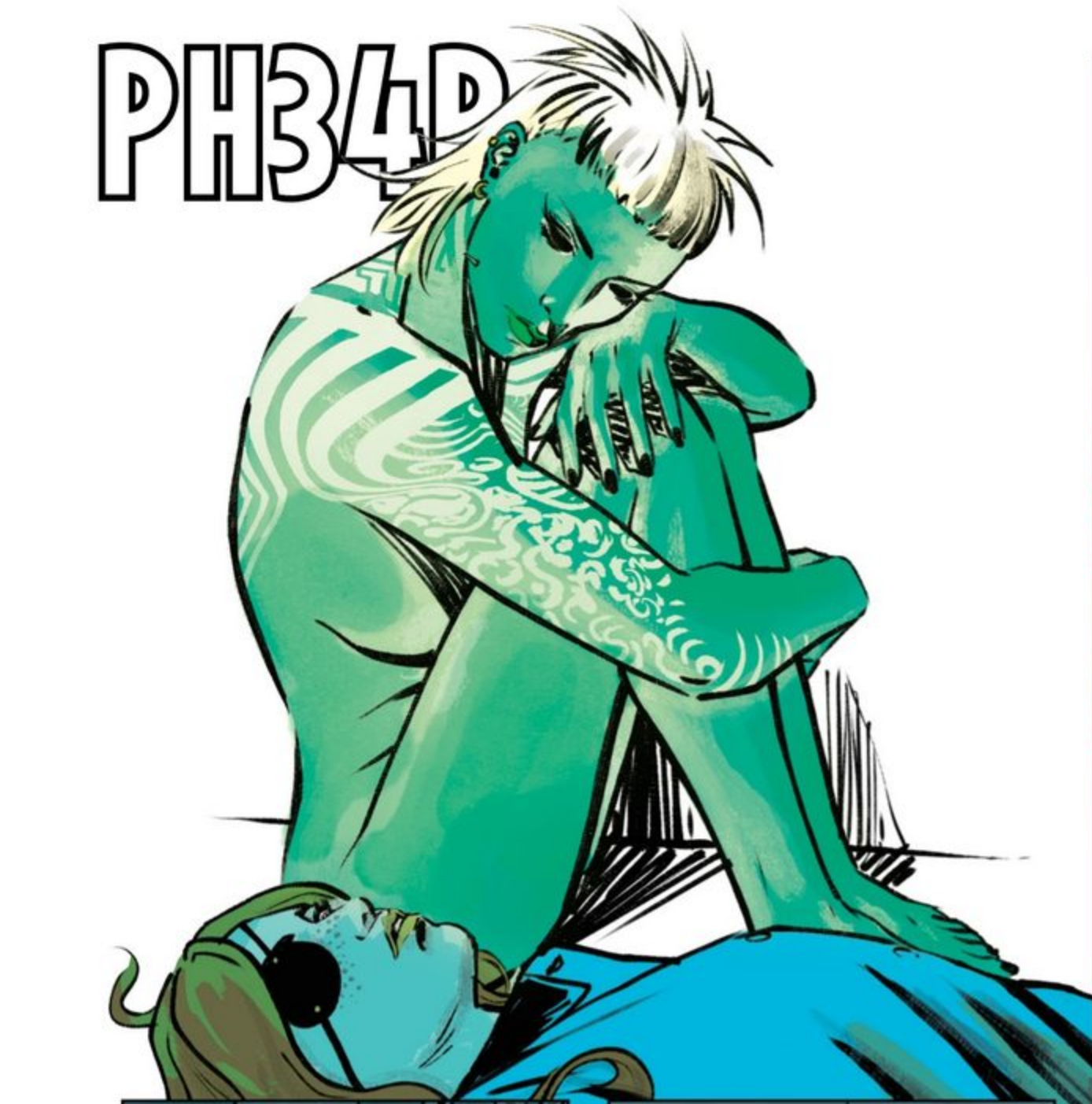
I RECOGNIZED
HOW HE MASKED HIS
IP. IT WAS *GABRIEL*.



HIM PLAYING HIS
GAME. IT'S ALL HIS
FUCKING GAME.

AND NOW
WE'RE ALL
STUCK
IN IT.

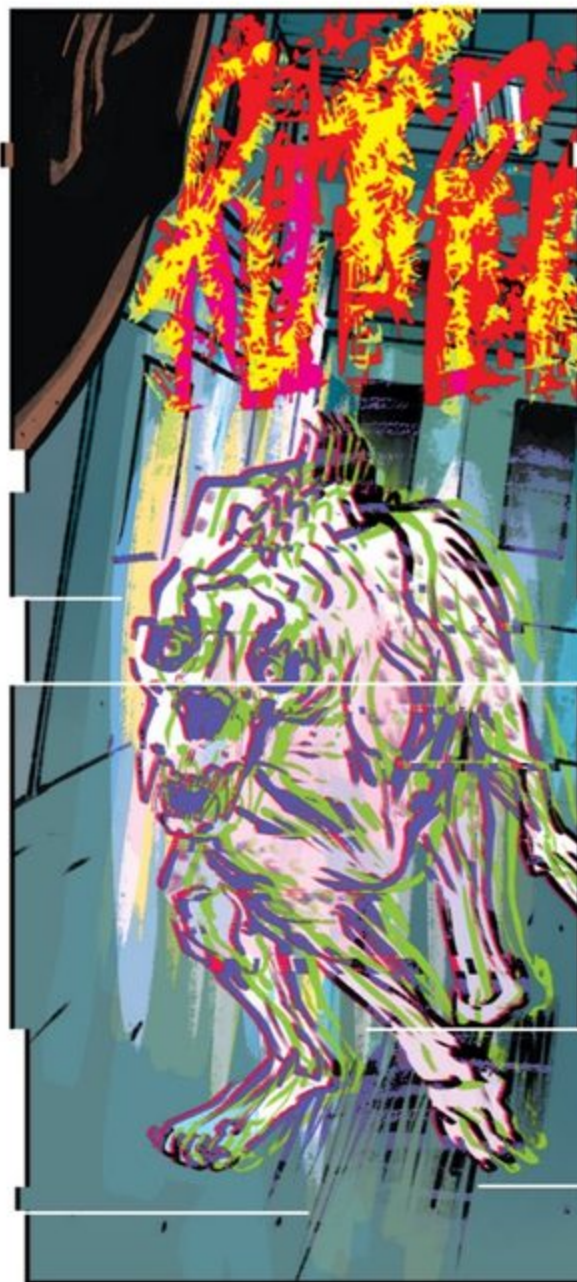
PH34D

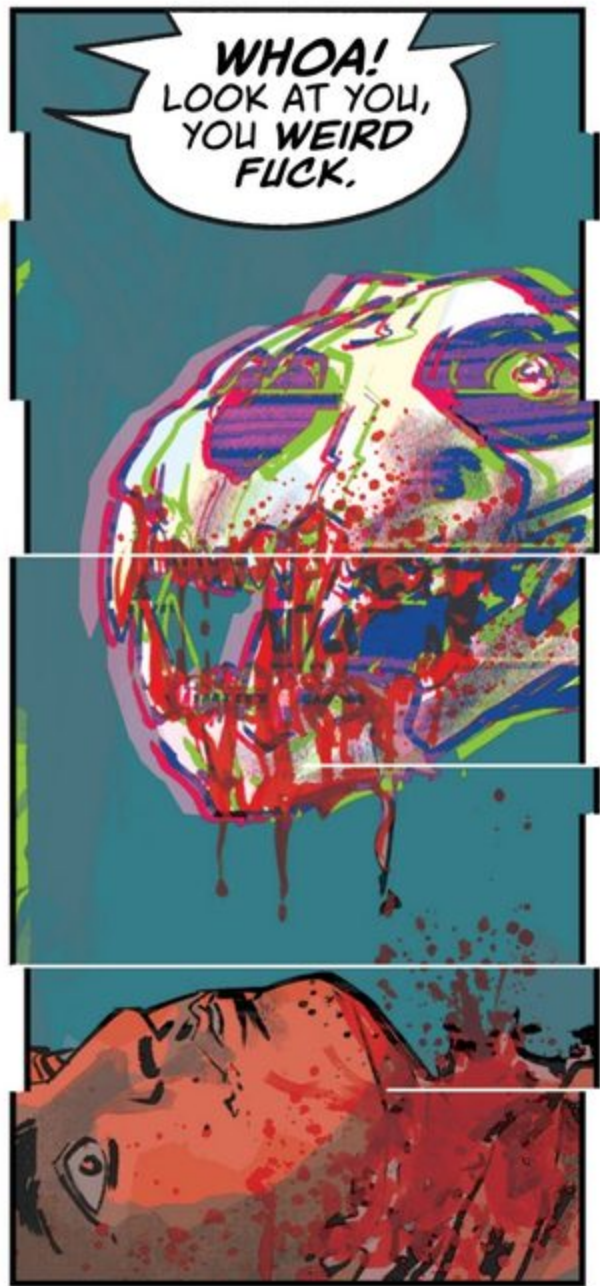
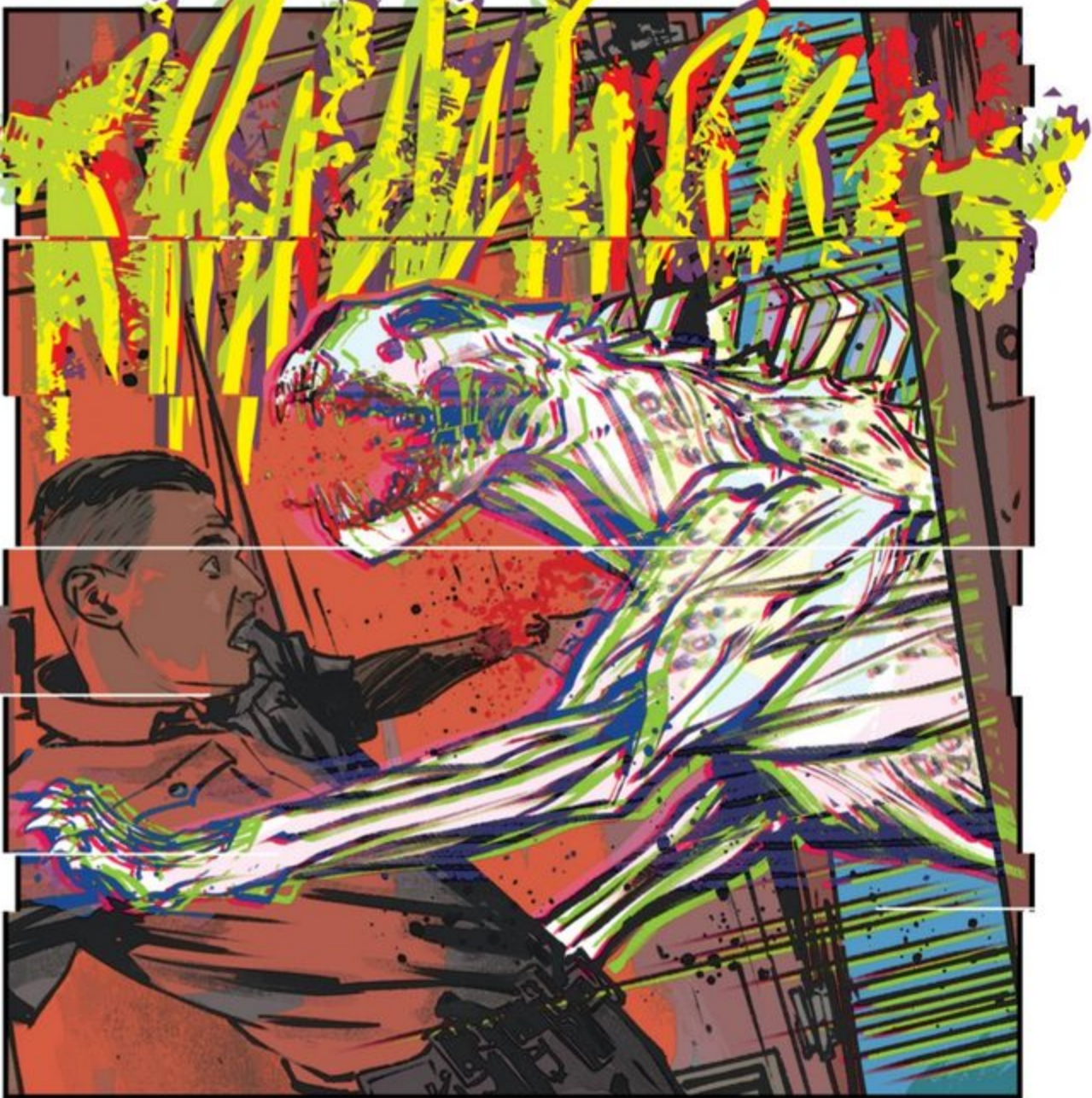


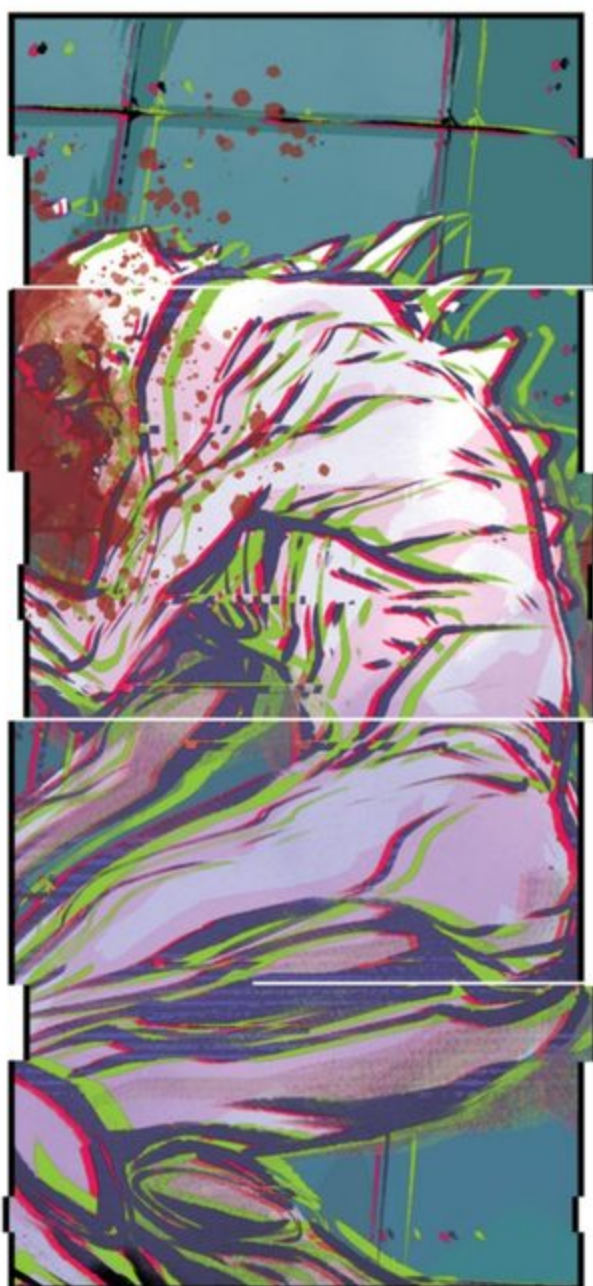
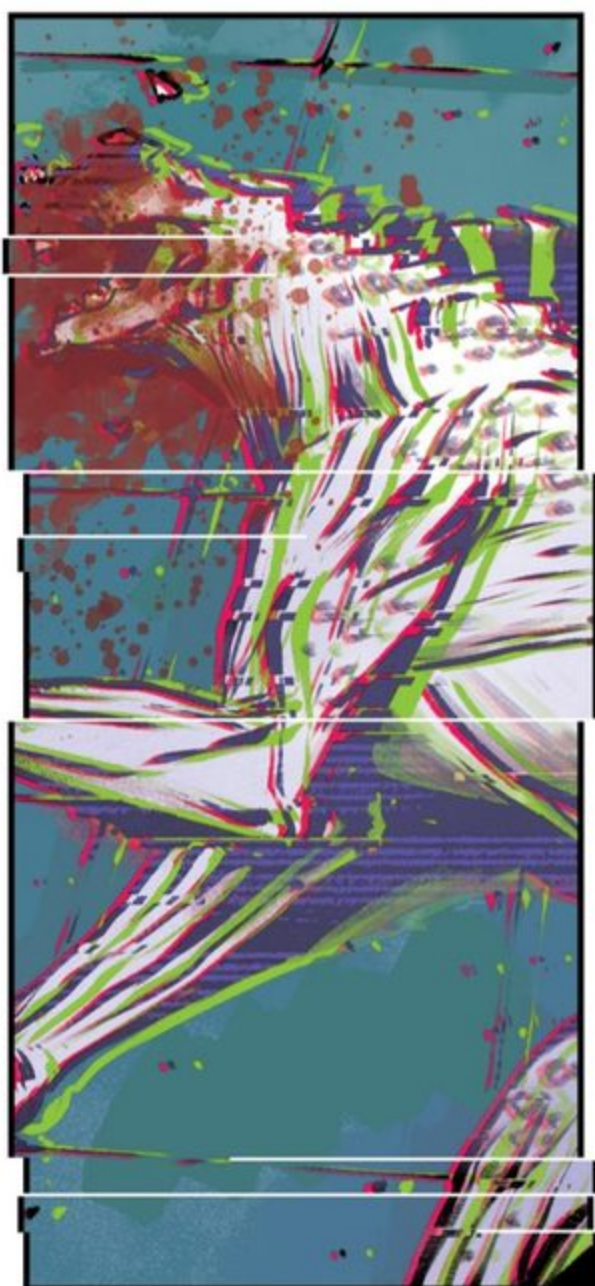
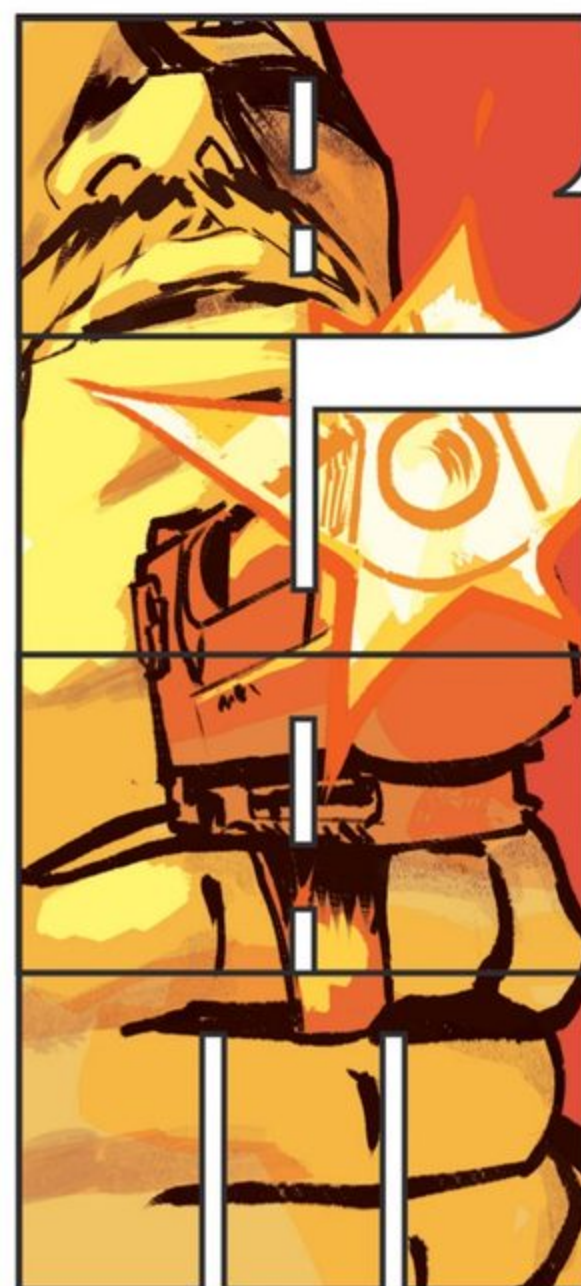
DO...DO YOU THINK SHE'S GONE?



I DON'T HEAR ANYTHING.









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Password:

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RETURN TO THE DYSTOPIAN AMERICAN EMPIRE
THIRTY-FIVE YEARS BEFORE **LITTLE BIRD**

PRECIOUS METAL™

DARCY
VAN POELGEEST

IAN
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SNEAK PREVIEW

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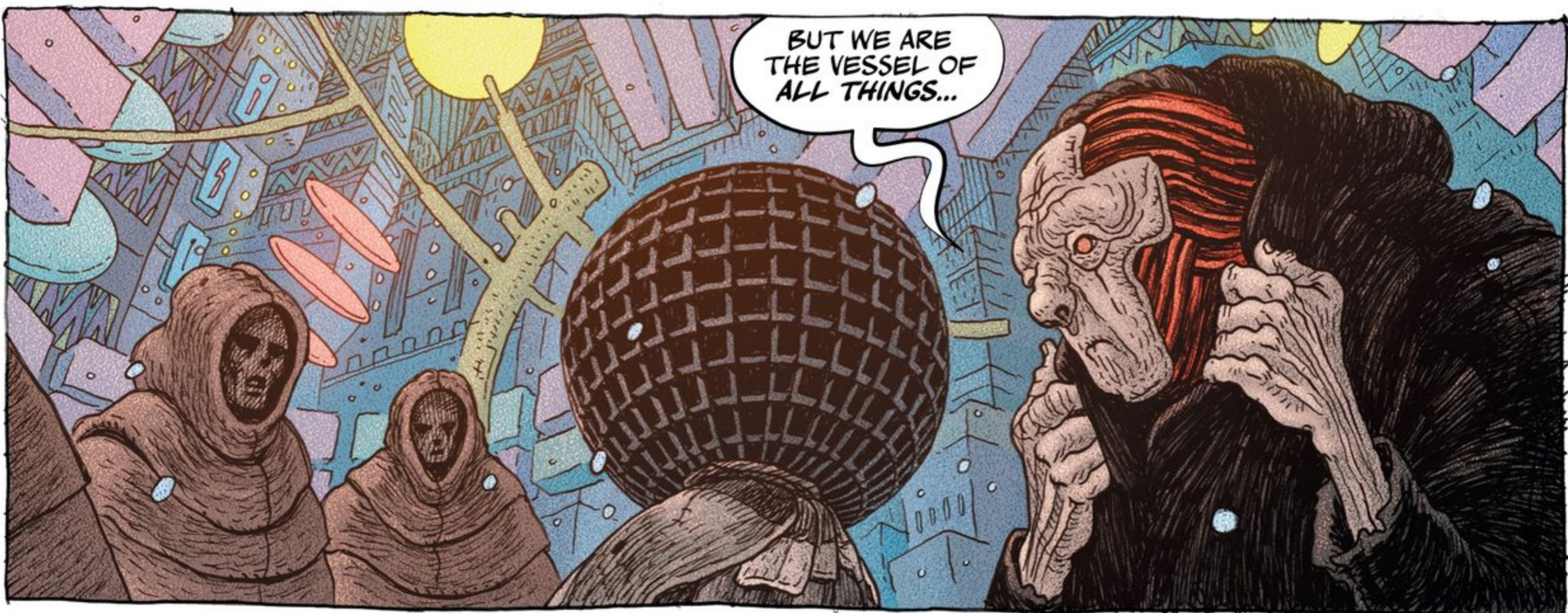
THIS GIG
BEGAN LIKE
ALL THE
OTHERS...

SOME MOD
CUTS OUT
EARLY ON
INDENTURED
SERVITUDE.

I RETURN
THEM TO THE
HIGHEST
BIDDER.

WELCOME,
WE ARE SO
PLEASED TO
FINALLY
RECEIVE
YOU.

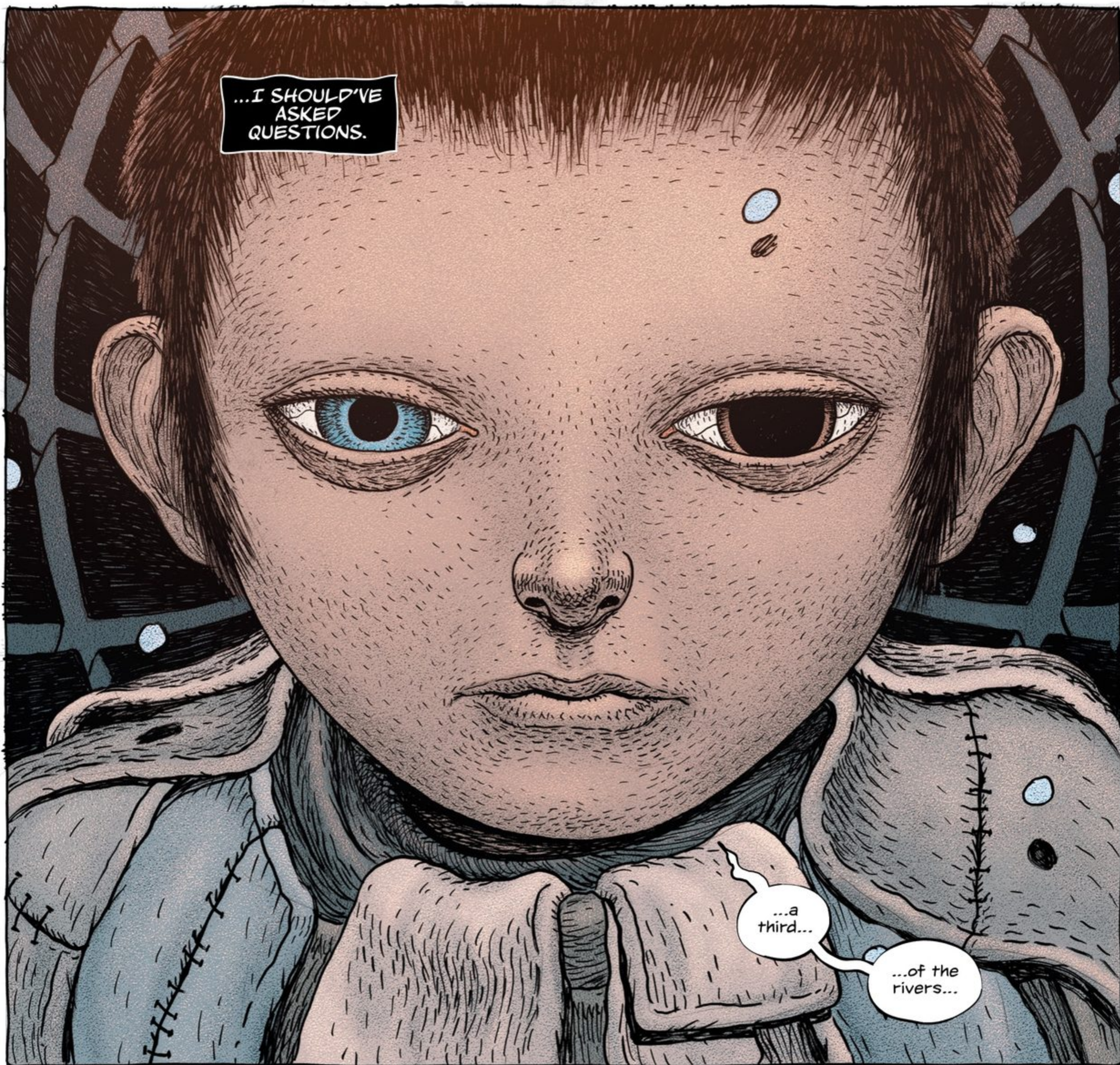
FIND,
DELIVER,
GET PAID.



IN RETROSPECT...

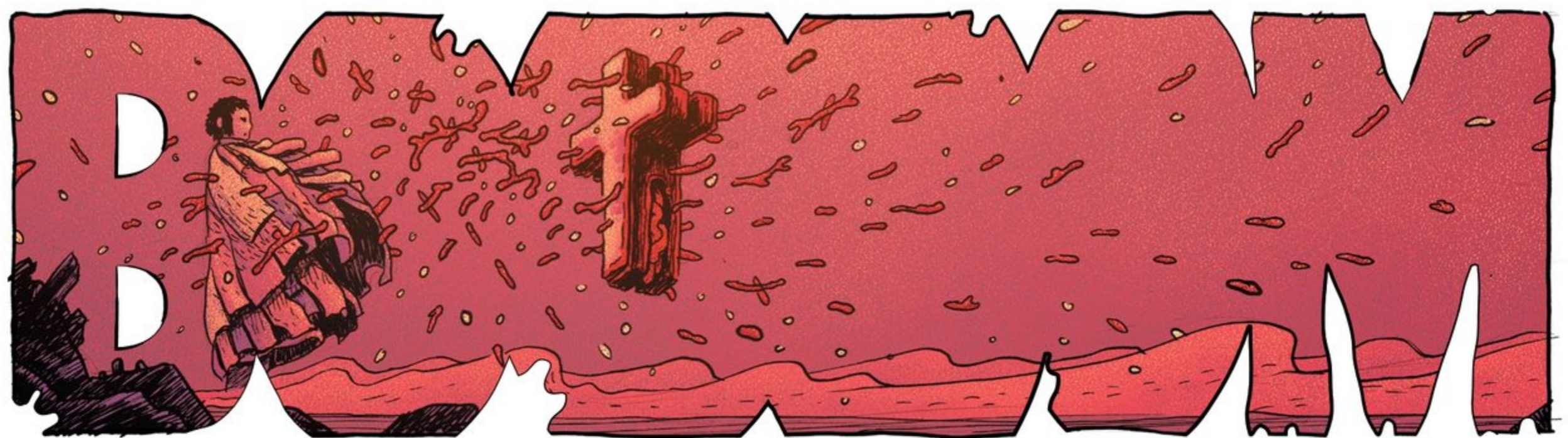
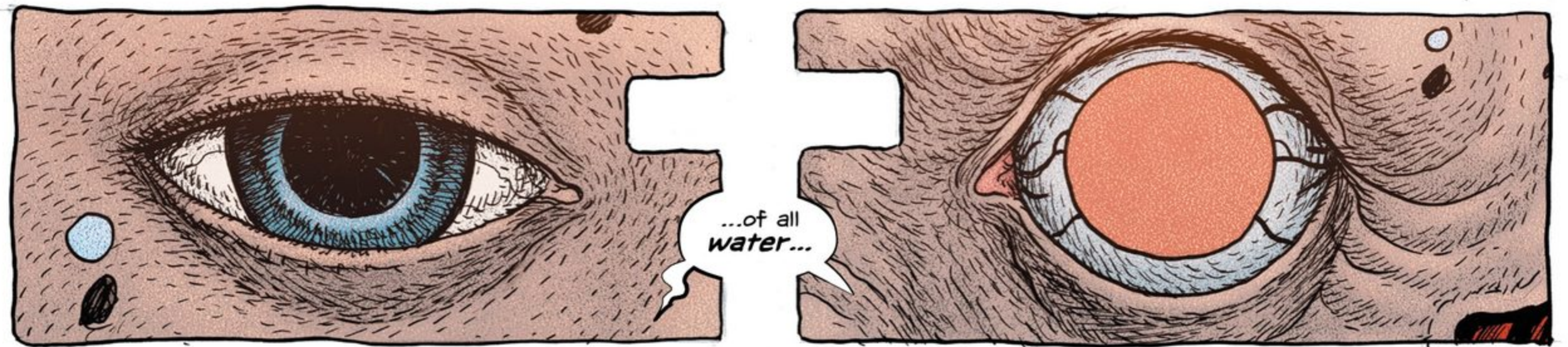


...I SHOULD'VE
ASKED
QUESTIONS.



...a
third...

...of the
rivers...

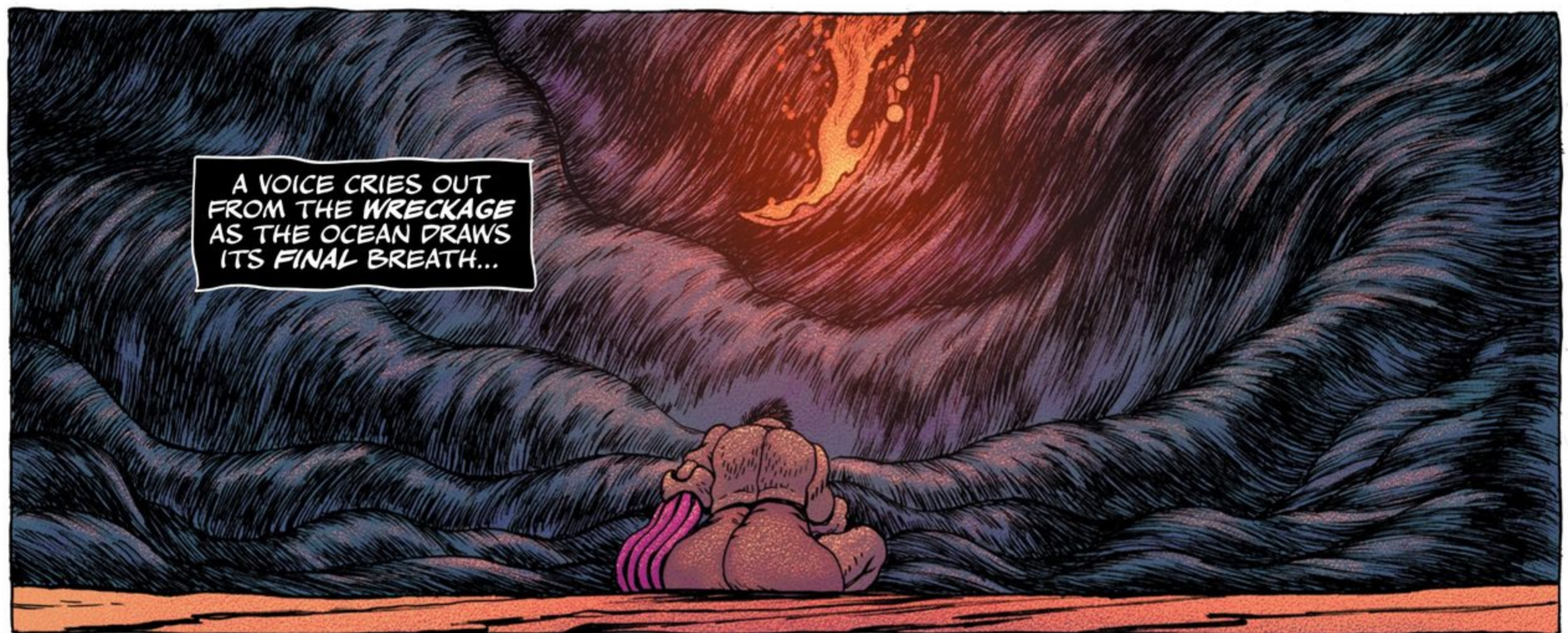




THE ROAR
OF DISTANT
WAVES.



A DREAM SHIP
BURNS ON
THE HORIZON.



A VOICE CRIES OUT
FROM THE WRECKAGE
AS THE OCEAN DRAWS
ITS FINAL BREATH...



What...
what is
this...?

We're
building...

...a
memory...

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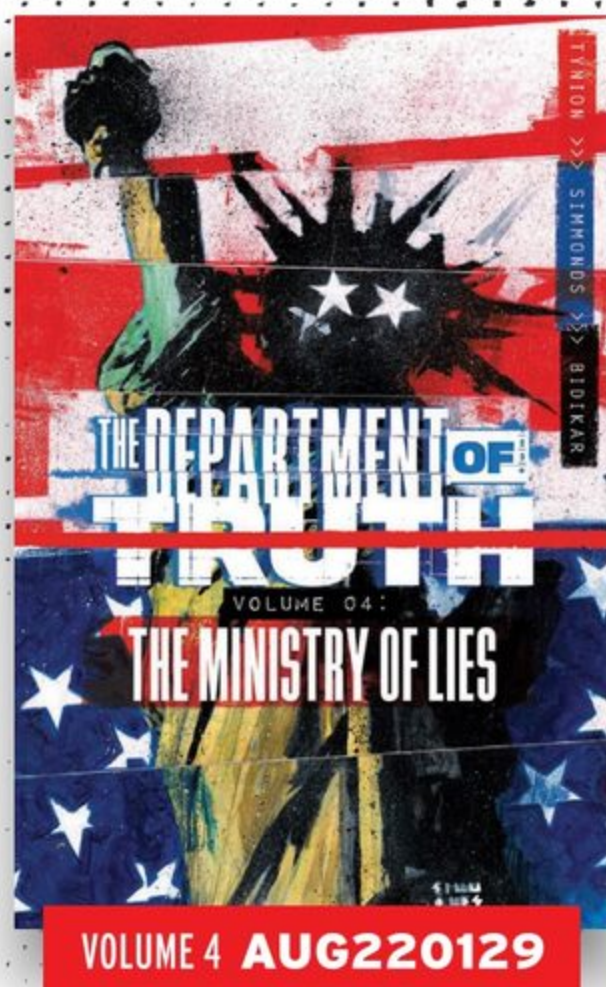
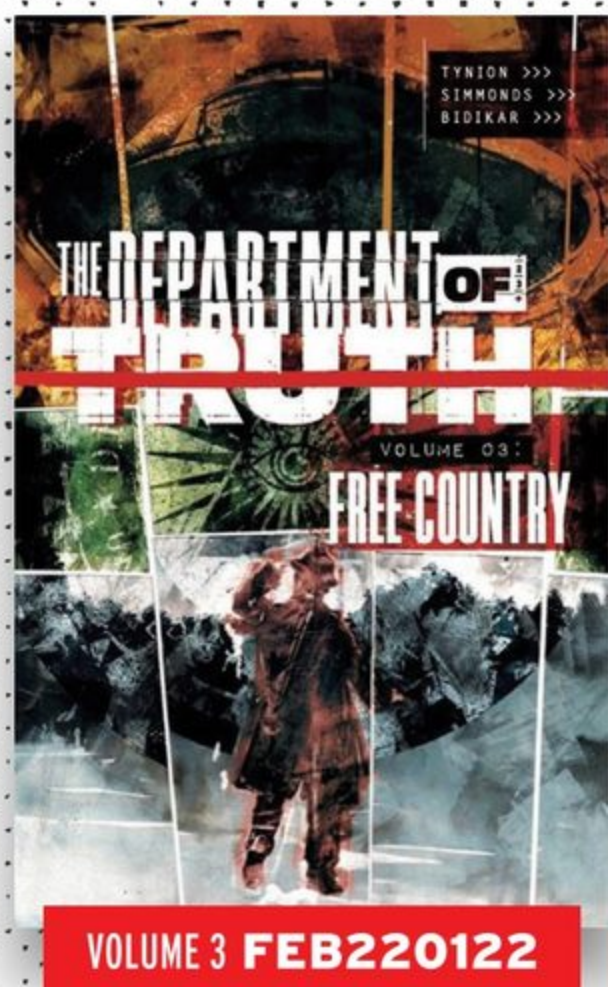
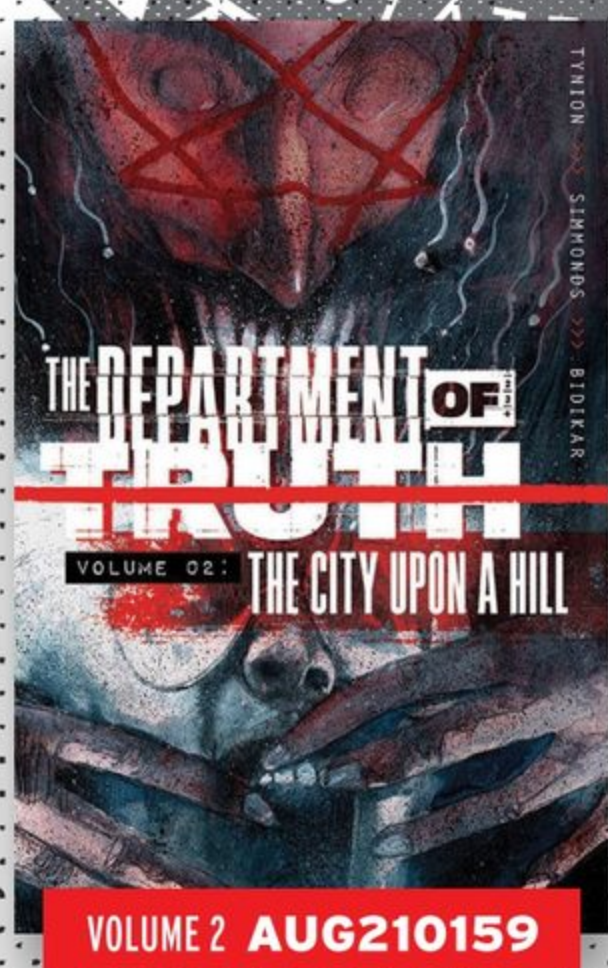
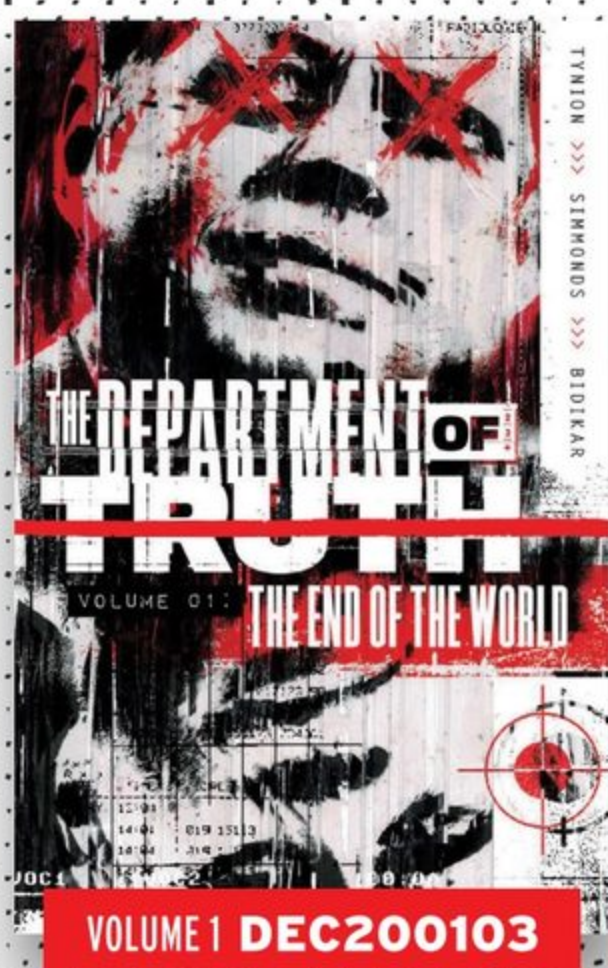
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